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November 12, 2014

Colleen McFarland,
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You have our full permission to digitize all issues of Gospel Herald and make them available for free, with full-text access.

Best wishes in this important endeavor!

Warmly,

Amy Gingerich
Editorial Director, MennoMedia

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

The church and the information superhighway:

Cyberspace is also God's space

Elders 'meetings' with participants in three different states. Congregational statement processing via e-mail. What's next—'606' in four parts via Ma Bell?

by Stuart W. Showalter

More than 18 million American households now have a computer equipped with a modem, giving them easy access to the information superhighway. This international communication network includes the basic lane of electronic mail (e-mail), the toll roads of the Internet, and the autobahn of the World Wide Web (a multi-media version of the Internet). In sum, this superhighway provides an unending panorama of documents and data, images and sounds, and new channels for interaction.

The church has the task of discerning cyberspace's small ramps and narrow lanes leading to life. It also must help us steer clear of its wide gates and broad avenues that point toward destruction.

The Christian church in general and the Mennonite church in particular have joined the virtual community that has formed around computers in the second half of the 20th century. Web users who go to *http://www.yahoo.com*, a widely-used index, and then branch into

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Larry A. Dunn:
Deciding when to stand between and when to stand alongside 6

Landis Homes held as example because of return of funds 9

Mission boards struggle with dwindling contributions 11

03/97
Heckman

The church has the task of discerning cyberspace's narrow lanes leading to life. It must also help us steer clear of the broad avenues that point toward destruction.

"society and culture" and "religion" can choose from hundreds of sites that address religious topics.

Mennonites have a strong World Wide Web presence too, extending themselves electronically both to their immediate communities and to the uttermost parts of the earth. An October 1995 search of sites revealed 610 occurrences of the word Mennonite in Web documents. These sites represent church agencies, colleges, conferences, publications, and congregations. While Mennonite Central Committee and the church colleges are dominant among Mennonites on the Web, congregations can also benefit from traveling on the information superhighway.

Connecting to the Web represents a sophisticated usage of computers, and—as of last October—13 congregations in Canada, Mexico, and the United States had already accomplished this goal. The Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, for example, has posted a home page—a one-screen entry point on the Web—that includes the name of the pastor, a phone number, hours for Sunday school, fellowship, and worship, introductions to congregational activities, and directions for reaching the church. It also includes an abbreviated mission statement and the e-mail addresses of some of its members. Anyone who encounters this page has a succinct overview of this congregation's mission, program, and structure.

Strengthening ties. While the Web offers opportunities for new forms of outreach, Mennonite churches use computer-based communication primarily to strengthen ties among current members. Twenty respondents to a survey on MennoLink, an on-line forum discussing Mennonite-related topics and concerns, reported more than 30 specific benefits computer communication have provided their congregations. These range from enhancing the prayer circles in one congregation and connecting them to the larger church, planning worship services more efficiently, receiving up-to-date news from denominational agencies, to deciding what to take to potluck meals.

Paul D. Liechty, pastor of First Mennonite Church of Fort Wayne, Ind., believes he was the first Mennonite minister to get involved with the Internet. "My primary goal then was to get sermon material from 'Lectionary and Sermonshop' discussions," he recalls. "I continue to do that somewhat now through the 'Preaching the Lectionary' listserv." (A listserv provides information and electronic discussion opportunities to computer users who "subscribe" to it, usually with no direct charge.)

Other computer-literate pastors, elders, and committee members who do planning and serve in other behind-the-scenes ways for their congregations strongly endorse computer-based communication. They illustrate its potential with these reports:

Marian Schwabbauer, an elder at First Mennonite Church in Iowa City: "We have used e-mail to schedule meetings, to set agendas, to draft proposals, and to share both congregational and churchwide information. Also, I have used it very successfully to develop a relationship with the teenager I am mentoring."

Phil Kniss, pastor of Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.: "The primary congregational benefit is that e-mail enhances communication between the church office and members. People can send their bulletin announcements by e-mail, which enables our secretary to use the information without retyping it. They can also send reports for our monthly newsletter."

Joe Miller, treasurer of the Germantown (Pa.) Mennonite Church: "I keep the books and write the checks, but the assistant treasurer collects the offering on Sunday and tracks the giving of individual members. When she has made an accounting of the offering, she e-mails me a copy so I can adjust the bank accounts in my records. Also, we have a computer in the church office, and I find e-mail immensely helpful in communicating with the pastor."

Mark Shelly, contact person with the Rochester (N.Y.) Area Mennonite Fellowship: "The leadership team has used e-mail to work on writing documents that need multiple drafts. Also, one of our members called for a day of prayer for Haiti, and we have written to our missionary with the Christian Peacemaker Team in the West Bank."

Vernon Schertz, one of three elders at Berea Mennonite Church in Atlanta, Ga.: "Since all three of us have e-mail and fax capabilities, we use those resources. Two of us have third party calling, so we can invite the cabinet chair or the

treasurer into our meetings on the spur of the moment. A day seldom goes by that we do not use e-mail or fax. I have e-mailed my cabinet items to Atlanta from Indianapolis; last spring I "attended" elders' meetings via three-way phone from three different locations while on a month-long trip to Arizona and California."

Extending pastoral care. A second, emerging use for computer-based communication involves extending pastoral care to members away from their congregational home. Pastors and other leaders are collecting e-mail addresses of their members and compiling them in directories. Then they can communicate with members close to home or far away with a group message or one focused on an individual.

Stan North Martin, a lay leader of the Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church, describes how e-mail enhances informal ties among people within his congregation: "We have already used this network to share prayer concerns or keep each other up-to-date with happenings in the congregation. More than once an announcement about the birth of a child in the church has gone out."

Kniss says he interacts with away-from-home members via the Internet. "E-mail is especially helpful in keeping in touch with college students, most of whom have e-mail accounts. I have even done some 'electronic pastoral care' for a member who had moved to a distant community and was going through adjustment difficulties. It was no substitute for face-to-face interaction; but in this case, it was far better than nothing at all."

Les Klassen Hamm, pastor of Wildwood Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Sask., believes that using the computer for communication sends a message in itself to a younger genera-

(continued on page 4)

MennoLink: a route for persons interested in Mennonites

One of the more active groups on the information superhighway these days is one dubbed MennoLink.

MennoLink is an informal organization of close to 1,200 computer users who are Mennonites or who are interested in discussing Mennonite-related topics. It is maintained through the volunteer work of three persons.

1. Jon Harder, Minneapolis, Minn., operates MennoLink's computer discussion forum. Actually, there are two: "Menno.d" is a service that automatically sends all items posted to it to its subscribers. "Menno" is an abbreviated version in which the system operator or "moderator" chooses which messages to post, based on what he determines to be subscriber interest.

2. Another service of MennoLink is a listing of individual e-mail addresses of MennoLinkers and others who want to be on the list. It is maintained by Thomas Lapp, Newark, Del.

3. MennoLink also has an electronic Mennonite Information Center on the World Wide Web. It is maintained by Gregg Skinner of Houston, Tex. By accessing this "web" page, computer users can find links to information on other web sites maintained by Mennonite organizations, conferences, congregations, schools, businesses, and even individuals.

Even though MennoLink uses the term "subscribers," all this is available free to anyone who already has access to e-mail or the Internet.

To learn how to subscribe to MennoLink, send an e-mail message to

info@MennoLink.org

Any message sent to this address will generate an automatic response which lists all MennoLink activities.

The list of Mennonite e-mail addresses is available from Thomas Lapp at:

mennolnk@menno.com

To access MennoLink's Mennonite Information Center, use this address:

http://www.prairienet.org/mennonite

—J. Lorne Peachey

A church that critiques popular culture must issue warnings about the dangers of computer technology—as well as determine how it can be used to glorify God.

tion: "Even if many people never look at the Wildwood Web page, the fact that our congregation has one communicates that we are open to new ideas, technology, and life in the '90s. For young folk worried about churches that 'live in the past,' it may send a message that this church is not afraid to be current—indeed, modern."

Keeping members informed. The computer can also help congregations become better informed about developments in the larger church, both within the denomination and beyond.

Tom Lehman, member of the Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church, contributes to his congregation in this way: "I forward peace messages on MennoLink to the director of our church's peace center to help him see himself in the context of Mennonite peace efforts. He's a recent Mennonite by choice, with no background in the denomination."

Joe Johns is an elder with the Carson City (Mich.) Fellowship, an emerging congregation based on the cell-church model. He searched for relevant materials on the Internet and found support: "In an effort to help the congregation become more aware of cell-church concepts and cell churches elsewhere, I subscribed to the cell-church e-mail list, a list not unlike MennoLink. Those who subscribe to it are pastors, cell leaders, and others who are either in cell churches or wish they were."

Jim Bishop of Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., tells how his congregation used information gleaned from the Internet to pray for a former attender, Bob Yoder, pastor of the Leetonia (Ohio) Mennonite Church. Bishop relayed to his congregation a MennoLink prayer request for Yoder, who was scheduled for serious surgery.

"We were able to give the congregation specific details as well as Bob's personal testimony in regard to what he was facing," Bishop writes. "This readily available information made the whole experience so much more immediate and real." Bishop added that the surgical procedure went much better than expected, and the medical team commented on the widespread support Yoder had received, support that was based on prayer generated through electronic channels.

Communicating via computers does have its negative aspects, with the most frequently cited disadvantage being its *lack of accessibility to everyone in the congregation.* The 20 Mennonite sources for this article, who live primarily in urban or university communities, estimated that a minority of 15 to 50 percent of their congregational members have computers at home or at work. The percentages in rural communities would be lower.

Joy Hofer from Clove College Community Church in California states sharply, "It's elitist. A lot of people are left behind. The 'virtual community' becomes a community within the larger church—a community that used to be called 'those in the know.' "

John Beck of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church echoes Hofer's concern: "The biggest problem is getting everyone access to a computer and e-mail. Until this happens, there will have to be a backup method of passing on information."

Another disadvantage of computer-based communication is its *cost,* both in money for buying equipment and software and in time for keeping systems up-to-date. Cruising the information superhighway also requires monthly toll charges and other entry fees. Beck, a technology expert who designed the Hyattsville Web page, comments, "It takes work to maintain the page, and if someone in the church doesn't have access to the equipment, there will be costs as well."

Some respondents cite the *amount of time individuals spend with their computers* as a disadvantage. Hamm calls the Internet "a sinkhole for time if you are not disciplined."

A fourth criticism concerns the *destructive orientation of much of the content on the information superhighway,* including pornographic stories and photographs, scathing personal attacks, rumors and other untruths, violent games, and rampant consumerism. Of course, similar messages are readily available in the mass media, shopping malls, libraries, and everyday conversation.

As always, the church community has the responsibility for discerning ways this new communication technology can glorify God and

(continued on page 8)

"I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us . . . according to the abundance of his steadfast love."—**Isaiah 63:7, NRSV**

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

What Is It About Which We Really Disagree? (Nov. 7). I am encouraged by your discerning and courageous statement that Mennonites should not be debating about the meaning of Scriptures. Instead, we should be determining how best to live by them as interpreted by biblical scholars.

Sometimes it seems there are as many meanings as there are debaters.

Al Albrecht
Goshen, Ind.

Thanks for printing J. Daryl Byler's article, ***For Richer, for Poorer*** (Dec. 5). Finally something has been written that challenges all of us to look at how we relate to the poor—without bashing the rich.

I continue to witness tremendous generosity from the financially wealthy Mennonites among us. I also know this type of writing is much more instructive and helpful than the typical missive that attempts to make the wealthy (which includes most of us, whether we like it or not) feel guilty.

Guilt hasn't worked very well. Thanks for this fresh approach.

J. B. Miller
Goshen, Ind.

Writer J. Daryl Byler's excellent article, ***For Richer, for Poorer*** (Dec. 5), captured the biblical imperative for comfortable Christians. He effectively restates that the way in which we address the plight of the poor is "to be a test of spiritual vitality."

Deuteronomy says: "Do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. . . . Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to" (15:7, 10, NIV).

As the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" becomes greater, we can do one of two things (faithful disciples *do not* have the option of doing nothing):

1. Become directly involved with poor individuals in one of the world's great poverty pockets. Deliberately relocate there and then proceed to obey the Scriptures on this extremely important matter.

2. Adopt a congregation or its projects that directly address the needs of people living in one of the many economically deprived areas of the world.

Since there are so many of these areas, many of us may need to relocate. If that is not an option, half or more of our tithes and half or more of our vacation time can be dedicated to the Lord's work in one of these areas.

If 10 to 20 people in every congregation were to do this, thousands would be blessed as a direct result. Those serving as well as those served would be the recipients of the Lord's blessings. And you can't out-give God.

Vern Miller
Cleveland, Ohio

I am quite concerned about the report, ***CFLS Issues Statement on Meaning of 'Dialogue'*** (Dec. 12). The 1987 statement from Purdue was adopted at Assembly by a large group of representatives, so I can't understand how a committee of seven can supplant the original document with their own interpretation. The only way to be fair to those who approved the statement is to print the complete document and let the words stand on their own.

My reading of the Purdue '87 document gives me the clear impression that the position of the church (and certainly of many individuals) on homosexuality is not resolved. I appreciate several phrases from the Purdue statement that recognize the ongoing nature of discerning God's will:

- We covenant with each other to study the Bible together and expand our insight into the biblical teachings relating to sexuality.
- We covenant with each other to take part in the ongoing search for discernment and for openness to each other.
- We covenant that *as we discern* God's will for our lives and our fellowship, we will seek to obey it, through God's grace and strength.

When we have trouble agreeing on a document adopted eight years ago, I guess I shouldn't be surprised that we can't agree on texts canonized over 1,800 years ago.

Kevin G. Landis
Harleysville, Pa.

Gospel Herald *welcomes your letters about our contents or about issues currently facing the Mennonite church. Send your letters to "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHERALD%mph@mcimail.com*

Mennonite peacemaking and conflict resolution:

Deciding when to stand between

Transformation is the accurate term to describe the peacemaking activities of the church. This is similar to another word that the church uses: conversion.

by Larry A. Dunn

All conflicts are different and expressed in a variety of ways. How we understand a particular conflict will influence the tool we select to deal with it.

Throughout history, the Mennonite Church has been blessed with many gifted and skilled peacemakers. The present is no exception. A small number of these faithful servants have been recognized both within and beyond the church's walls for their outstanding and often courageous work. Recently, a number of authors who have reflected on the history of the broader conflict resolution movement have acknowledged the work of Mennonites as significant within its religious stream.

Among other approaches, conflict resolution includes alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes. In a recent book, *The Promise of Mediation* (Simon & Schuster, 1994), Robert Baruch Bush and Joseph Folger identify four different "stories" of mediation within the ADR movement.

Bush and Folger first point to the ***satisfaction story,*** which they believe presently dominates mediation practice in the United States. The satisfaction story is focused on creative problem-solving. It stresses "win-win" outcomes. Potentially divisive conflicts are reframed as mutual problems to be overcome through collaboration. Achieving harmony can be essential for community well-being, because too much conflict or a constant state of chaos can distract us from our mission as the church and put the survival of the group and its individual members at risk.

For mediators and other types of peacemakers, helping to satisfy the needs of people entangled in the web of conflict may be an important task. But it might be said that a church without conflict is like a marriage without disagreement: likable enough but not growing or going anywhere. Yet focusing solely on the settlement of issues—which are often symptoms of underlying conflict—detracts from the transformative moments along the way.

The second and third stories Bush and Folger identify are two sides of the same coin. The *oppression story* describes mediation as a dangerous instrument for neutralizing the social justice gains achieved by many social movements. Mediation as a private, informal process, it says, produces unjust outcomes which favor the powerful and take advantage of the weak. On the other hand, the *social justice story* sees mediation as a vehicle for organizing individuals and groups against exploitation and promoting equality and greater justice.

In spite of conventional wisdom which suggests that we are becoming an increasingly litigious society, the voices which emerge from the ***oppression story*** have raised questions about the effect that certain forms of peacemaking, such as mediation, are having on society at large. Many claim that we have become a "harmony" society, suppressing the realities of class, gender, and racial antagonisms which surround us. A few lay the responsibility for this ideology of harmony at the church's doorstep.

Discomfort with conflict in the Mennonite Church, for example—arising from our often

and when to stand alongside

negative experience of conflict and its effects—has led us to view disagreement and controversy as dysfunctional and threatening to the life of the church community. No wonder then that we have this concern for "resolution."

The church clearly has something to learn from the oppression story for its peacemaking work. In the present climate of concern over homosexuality, the merger of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church, and other potentially divisive issues in Mennonite congregations, the warning that mediation may be used to manipulate, silence, and exert coercive pressure is one we must not overlook. This kind of "peace" works against those who are already disadvantaged by encouraging conformity and acquiescence when more radical solutions may be called for.

The ***social justice story*** deals with the slogan, "No justice, no peace!" This is not just the cry of protestors angry over the turn of recent events. Rather this is a cry from the ages, from God's prophets of old. Jeremiah cried out against the false prophets who say, " 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). While some claim that peacemaking is not about pursuing social justice, the biblical warning against oppression reminds us that we cannot have *shalom* without it. Justice is a matter of right relationships. And peace is the fruit of righteousness and justice (Isa. 32:17).

Contemporary usage suggests a kind of *quid pro quo* which holds out on the offer of peace as it waits for justice to be done. Peace is not peace at all in the absence of justice. One cannot be exchanged for the other. The biblical concern for social justice involves advocacy on behalf of the marginalized and oppressed—the crowd Jesus was accused of hanging out with—in an effort to redress imbalances of power. This is central to the peacemaking task. Perhaps this is partly what Jesus meant by that most difficult of statements, "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34).

Finally, Bush and Folger offer the ***transformation story,*** the picture of mediation as they think it should be: a process which transforms the moral character of individual disputants and eventually society as a whole.

Transformation has become a buzzword within conflict resolution circles. Many practitioners have simply substituted transformation for other terms used in the past (such as management, reduction, and resolution) without a real change in meaning. If we merely adopt the term without clearly defining its meaning for us, we are likely to do the same.

I believe transformation is a meaningful and accurate term for describing the peacemaking work of the Mennonite church. The reason should be obvious. The church has a similar term of great significance: conversion. Conversion, or turning around, is a rich word which describes a necessary aspect of Christ's work of salvation.

Carolyn Schrock-Shenk, associate director of Mennonite Conciliation Service, suggests that it is salvation which connects conversion to peacemaking. Biblical salvation involves reconciliation between God and people, between the earth and people, and between ourselves. It is both "vertical" and "horizontal," personal and social, individual and corporate. And like Christ's transformation of our lives (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18), the transformation of conflict is not of our own doing but received as a gift from God.

Bush and Folger's notion of transformative mediation involves *empowerment* of the individual and *recognition* of the other person's condition and their place in life and its conflicts. The call for empowerment and recognition is well-grounded in the biblical story. Both are crucial to our life together, especially in times of conflict.

In the church we recognize the active role of the Holy Spirit for empowering followers of Christ (Rom. 8). The commitment to train peacemakers in practical skills is a form of empowerment. It reflects a view of peacemaking as not just a profession but as a way of life. As such, we accept the call to transform conflict as mediators and trainers, as parents and members of the church, and in other roles through fair and participatory processes which seek to include a diversity of voices in pursuit of justice and peace.

Recognition of the other is only possible through a Spirit-centered humility, grounded in mutual confession and based on Christ's call to love even our enemies—though we must be careful about whom we label as "enemy." This does *not* mean sacrificing the gospel for religious relativism or ignoring our deepest convictions. But it does mean living by the fruit of the Spirit, humbly acknowledging our own sinful condition as one with that of others before God.

Especially in times of conflict, we must refuse to play God by pretending that we grasp the

A transformation approach to peacemaking and mediation recognizes the limits of any strategy and seeks to determine the most appropriate response.

entirety of God's revealed truth in all matters (Rom. 11:33-34). If we claim to have been delegated the final authority for deciding who's in and who's out, we have mistaken the church for the kingdom (Rom. 2:1-4). To paraphrase Tony Campolo, when Jesus comes back, I want to be on the welcoming committee, not the membership committee!

Christ's call to peacemaking requires an even more radical, all-encompassing kind of transformation than Bush and Folger describe. The gospel demands a commitment to peacemaking that takes each story seriously. Mediation is no panacea. But the gospel is! A biblical approach to transforming conflict affirms the value of different responses to brokenness and injustice—even those which create or escalate conflict with the ultimate hope of establishing a new relationship of justice and peace.

It has been said in the past that Mennonites have a comprehensive peace theology without an equally comprehensive approach to peacemaking. As we come to the next century we are confronted with new and increasingly difficult challenges for transforming conflict. The implication for the church is that we must resist the temptation of assuming that every conflict is the same and therefore in need of immediate resolution. Conflict transformation constantly seeks to balance the ongoing tension between mediation and nonviolent advocacy as compatible, interdependent approaches.

An old saying applies well to working as a peacemaker: "When the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." All conflicts are different, involve multiple factors, and are expressed in a variety of ways. How we understand a particular conflict will influence the tool we select to deal with it.

A transformative approach recognizes the limits of any given strategy and seeks to determine the most appropriate response or combination of responses. It calls us to make decisions about when to stand between and when to stand alongside, when to forgive and when to hold back, when to pursue harmony and when to confront with conflict. As followers of the Prince of Peace, we need go no further than the gospel to find our way.

Larry A. Dunn has worked in mediation for a number of years and has a master of arts degree in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is currently enrolled in the interdisciplinary social science doctoral program at Syracuse (N.Y.) University and also works as a private mediation consultant. Larry and Susan have two sons and are members of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church.

Cyberspace is also God's space

(continued from page 4)

build the kingdom. To remain in conversation with itself and the larger world, the church must carefully consider the information superhighway, taking advantage of its great potential for good while avoiding the potholes of evil.

As Vernon Schertz from the Berea Mennonite Church in Atlanta, Ga., notes, "In our wildest (and unreal) dreams, we visualize a metropolitan congregation all on e-mail and three-way phone chained together endlessly. Then we can forget the bulletin and have our committee and congregational meetings by phone. What next? The worship service? 606 in four-part harmony via Ma Bell?"

A church that once banned television and still critiques popular culture has an obligation to issue warnings about the dangers of computer technology. With care, however, technology can also be used—and is being used—to glorify God. If John Bunyan were alive today, perhaps he would create an electronic version of *Pilgrim's Progress* to help us navigate the way. As an alternative, maybe we who spend so much time in front of computer monitors should turn them off for a while each day to remember that cyberspace is God's space.

Stuart W. Showalter, professor of communication at Goshen (Ind.) College, is exploring the information superhighway as a visiting scholar at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill during the 1995-96 academic year. Showalter did the research for this article via the Internet and wrote and submitted it via computer—though he admits that "it would have been easier at times to revert to more traditional methods, but I was determined!"

Landis Homes returns money gained from charity scam to help pay back other non-profit organizations that lost

Lititz, Pa.—Landis Homes, a Mennonite retirement community here, is giving back the money it gained from investment in the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy.

Arlin M. Adams, trustee for the bankruptcy estate left behind when the large-scale charity scam collapsed in May, is holding Landis Homes up as an example to other creditors in the case, according to an article in the Lancaster *Intelligencer Journal*. Adams says that although Landis Homes is not the only organization returning its share, it stands out in part because of its religious affiliation.

Adams announced Dec. 14 that Landis Homes has agreed to refund $180,900. The refund, which must be approved by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Philadelphia, will help rebuild the pot to pay back charities that lost money in the scam.

"If the money we've received came from another organization, then we certainly don't want it. We thought returning the money was the Christian thing to do," says administrator Edward Longenecker. He said he is surprised by the publicity about the return.

"Our concern would be for those who have spent the money and are finding it difficult to pay it back," Longenecker says. "I don't know the answer for them."

Mennonites win some, lose some. At least nine Mennonite-related institutions were among the hundreds of organizations and individuals who deposited money with or received money from the New Era foundation. Investments in the foundation resulted in gains of up to $1.7 million (U.S.) and losses as great as $2 million for Mennonite-related institutions.

New Era is now being called a Ponzi scheme—an illegal practice in which investments are paid off with high returns, using contributions of later investors. President John G. Bennett, Jr., promised to double investors' money in six months by using matching donations from anonymous—and fictional, as it turns out—benefactors.

Adams announced in July that agencies that came out ahead through their New Era involvement should return the money quickly or face legal action. The voluntary refund program instituted by Adams asks creditors to return funds equal to the payments they received from New Era.

Teenager cracks code of campus computer system

Harrisonburg, Va.—A 16-year-old visitor to Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., recently cracked the security code to the campus-wide computer network, giving access to confidential files to anyone with an EMU password.

Software that the youth got from a computer bulletin board gave "supervisory privileges" to the 1,300 faculty, staff, and students linked by the network.

"One of the unintended consequences was that the program the young man ran broke down the system's security," says Ron Helmuth, director of information systems at EMU. "It was the worst possible scenario. For about five hours, there was no such thing as systems integrity. All information on this network could have been accessed by anyone with a valid computer password."

'Security is a myth.' A review of computer activity during the period indicated that EMU students did not access classified files.

The incident occurred Dec. 2 when the youth was visiting his brother, a student at EMU. The teenager says that when he realized the extent of the problem, he sent an electronic mail message to Helmuth with an apology for his actions and alerted an EMU computer technician. Corrections were made and service restored that evening.

Professors' files, student papers, records kept by staff members, private electronic mail, and other sensitive material could have been viewed or changed by any person accessing the system. Financial data such as payroll and donor information is kept elsewhere and could not have been affected.

Helmuth estimates that some 200 hours were required to run tests on the system following the break-in and to upgrade security.

Helmuth and Patti Helton, vice-president for student life, have met with the youth, his parents, and their attorney and worked out a settlement arranged to avoid the court system. The Commonwealth of Virginia apparently intends to press charges, however, and the youth and his parents are anticipating a court date in January.

"He was not one bit interested in what was in the files. His interest was purely technical," the teenager's mother says. "It was wrong. But as soon as he realized there was a problem, he was fully cooperative," she adds. "He has been totally forthright from the very beginning."

"No computer system . . . can be made completely safe," says EMU president Joseph L. Lapp. "Nevertheless, this unfortunate incident has caused us to look again at ways we can limit the risk to individuals who use our network and to the university as a whole. I hope that this experience will increase the resolve of everyone on campus and elsewhere to use computers responsibly and to consider the consequences of their actions when communicating electronically."

"Security in any computer network is to some extent a myth," Helmuth says. "Anyone who says otherwise is not being forthright."

Comforters . . . in more ways than one. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Brad Ginter (left) of Mennonite Central Committee and Lloyd, a client of the Comprehensive AIDS Program (CAP) in Belle Glade, Fla., display one of the comforters that CAP distributes to people with AIDS. The comforters are hand-made by volunteers in material resource centers and local sewing groups and are among 27,000 blankets that MCC sent overseas and domestically in 1995.

Winter relief program to assist Afghanistan widows

Kabul, Afghanistan (MCC)—As the bitter wind howls through the mountain passes, war-weary residents of Afghanistan's beleaguered capital brace for another winter of food and heating fuel shortages.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) with Tear Fund and CARE International launched a winter relief program in Kabul the last week in December. Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, MCC is supplying 2,500 metric tons (MT) of wheat, 110 MT of beans, and 65 MT of cooking oil, all valued at more than $1.2 million (U.S.).

Since April of 1992 competing factions in the country's civil war have turned Kabul into a battleground. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been killed, wounded, or displaced from their homes. The city has been without electricity for nearly two years. Buildings have been reduced to rubble, and water, phone, and sewage systems have been destroyed.

Fending for themselves. Some MCC aid will assist widows and their children, who are among Kabul's most vulnerable residents. Years of war have separated and impoverished extended families that traditionally cared for widows and fatherless children. Now many are left to fend for themselves.

This winter some 300 families will receive MCC food through the Mother and Child Health Clinic in Kabul, run by the International Assistance Mission. Additional MCC wheat will be given to widows in exchange for their work on quilts through the Kabul Widow Program, a CARE project. The remainder of MCC's aid will go to laborers who install pumps and work on water projects.

In late November Ron Bietz, MCC's food aid manager, spent several days in Kabul meeting with staff from the agencies that will distribute the food. During one meeting, he heard bombing and later discovered a residential section of the city had been hit; 39 people, including 12 children, were reported killed.

Aiding despite risks. "The situation is clearly unstable. There are risks involved in trying to move food into Kabul," says Bietz. "But the need is there, so we believe we must try."

The food will be trucked from warehouses in Pakistan. Some routes are insecure due to fighting, and other roads are believed to have mines.

Afghanistan played a prominent role during the Cold War. When the former Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, the United States supplied arms to the resistance, known as the Mujahideen or freedom fighters.

After 10 years of war, the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. In 1992 the Mujahideen drove out Afghanistan's communist government and almost immediately turned their vast arsenals on one another. In recent months the Taliban, a militant Islamic student group, has begun attacking Kabul and the surrounding areas. Over the past decades MCC has supplied bandages, medical supplies and other material resources to Afghanistan but has not placed workers there.—*Pearl Sensenig*

A mother brings her children to be vaccinated at the Mother and Child Health Clinic in Kabul, Afghanistan.

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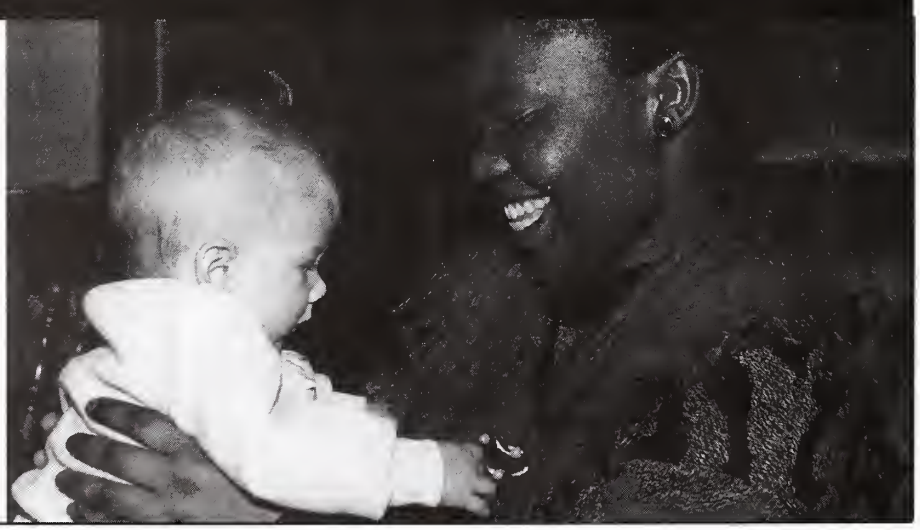

Bazookas into bicycles:

Group gathers to watch weapons destroyed

Maputo, Mozambique (MCC)—Soldiers, defense force commanders, bishops, church leaders, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers.

This unlikely mix of people gathered in a barren military training field strewn with fragments of spent ammunition in mid-November. There they witnessed the destruction of 282 bazooka rockets, 275 mortar mines, 88 mortars, anti-personnel mines, hand grenades, and other military hardware. Military personnel cautiously arranged the weapons, laced them with dynamite, and set fuses.

The weapons destruction was part of the Christian Council of Mozambique's program "Transformation of Arms into Hoes" program, launched in mid-October. People who deliver weapons to a church office receive bicycles, sewing machines, tools, or tractors donated by German church organizations. A truck also travels to various weapons collection points and destroys guns on the spot.

The weapons are the legacy of Mozambique's 15-year civil war that ended in 1992. Hungry Mozambican refugees sold AK-47s in South African townships for the equivalent of six dollars (U.S.).

In the early 1990s, Mary Yoder Holsopple and other MCC workers began trying to find ways to aid in disarming the region. Local church leaders had begun examining the possibility of buying back and destroying weapons. Some affirmed the idea as a way to address increasing violent crime and suggested recycling guns into useful items such as candleholders. Others felt the idea was too short-sighted and complicated.

Bishop Denis Sengulane surveys weapons about to be destroyed as part of the Christian Council of Mozambique's "Transformation of Arms into Hoes" program. People can exchange weapons for sewing machines, tractors, or other household or farm tools.

But Anglican bishop Denis Sengulane, president of the Christian Council of Mozambique's committee of peace and reconciliation, insisted that "turning swords into plowshares" should be a top priority for churches. From this early dreaming emerged the program of collecting weapons and exchanging them for farming and household tools. The government supports the program and has supplied military specialists to help.

"While I felt the experience was a privilege, I was confused by my emotions. This was the closest I've come to war, the first time I've experienced a bit of the violence of arms," MCC worker Debi Leeper says of watching the weapons destruction.

When all the weapons were in place, the group retreated to the safety of a lookout site about a mile away and saw the flash, heard the deafening roar, and watched a thick, dark cloud rise.

Afterwards, Bishop Sengulane asked the MCC workers, "Did you ever believe your peace theology would lead you to a scene like this?"

—Fremont and Sara Regier

Mission boards report dwindling individual and congregational contributions

Elkhart, Ind., and Salunga, Pa. (MBM-EMM)—Contributions to Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), Elkhart, Ind., and Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), Salunga, Pa., have dropped.

Despite a fifth consecutive year of strong estate giving, individual and congregational contributions to MBM have fallen by $180,000. If the present giving pattern continues, MBM could wind up $300,000 short of anticipated contributions by the end of its fiscal year Jan. 31. The mission board needs to raise $1.5 million in two months to reach its budgeted contributions.

"The downturn in contributions represents a concern, but we are encouraged by the continuing generosity that we have seen in the estate contributions," said MBM President Stanley Green.

The decline in contributions follows a national pattern of flat or decreasing giving to denominations and church agencies. Flat congregational giving has plagued MBM for more than five years, according to Ed Burkholder, MBM director of finance.

Estate contributions, which have averaged $500,000 annually for the last five years, have totaled $761,000 to date. Individual giving remains behind by 16 percent ($125,000) this year, while congregational giving is down 1 percent ($55,000).

EMM cuts number of workers. A new budget at EMM means a reduction of 20 overseas workers, four fewer church planters, and the closing of the Philadelphia Youth Evangelism Service center.

The board approved a $6 million budget for 1996, a 6 percent decrease from the 1995 budget. The $400,000 decrease reflects lower receipts from estates and annuities, a decrease in contributions, and reduced Voluntary Service household earnings.

The Philadelphia center was one of three centers operated by Discipleship Ministries (DM). Proceeds from sale of the center will go to the development of several international training centers.

"These decisions reflect a vision that has been growing for several years now," says Galen Burkholder, director of DM. "We want to make the best use of our training facilities for cross-cultural learning and ministry, and we want to multiply training and service opportunities by sharing resources with our international partners."

Burkholder reports that French Mennonites plan to launch a training center in late 1996 or early 1997.

Puerto Ricans share dollars with MBM

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—Mennonites in Puerto Rico sent early Christmas gifts to the Mennonite Board of Missions in the form of dollar bills in November.

In a three-week period beginning Nov. 7, Puerto Ricans sent 17 offering envelopes in response to MBM's Touching Lives appeal.

No typical contents here. "Almost all of the donations were cash," says Betty Weaver, finance secretary and bookkeeper for MBM. "Very few sent checks, and many of the donations were in sums of one or two dollars. Some people sent five dollars."

This was the first year congregations in Puerto Rico received Touching Lives envelopes since they officially joined the Mennonite Church in North America in April 1994.

"It brings hope to see this high level of mission interest from Puerto Rico," says Ron Yoder, MBM vice president for Partnership Services. The 40-year-old Puerto Rico conference has contributed $101 to the fall appeal to date. Across the Mennonite Church, 80 individuals and seven congregations have contributed $11,544.

Happy to give what they can. Fifteen people returned envelopes from Iglesia Menonita de Aibonito when the pastor, Angel Miranda, made an announcement about the envelopes, placing them on a table at the entrance. Miranda did not suggest a donation amount but said people are happy to contribute when asked and that they give what they can. The per capita income for Puerto Rico is approximately $6,360.

The increased interest shows readiness for a relationship change, according to Yoder. "To me it is a signal that this conference wants to be an equal participant in the mission effort of the Mennonite Church. It is saying they want to be partners with MBM and the broader church."

Mennonite presence in Puerto Rico dates to June 1943 when the first Civilian Public Service workers arrived. The CPS program there was later transferred to MBM. In 1945, the first Mennonite missionaries arrived. Workers converted a tobacco barn into a clinic and hospital, helped local farmers, and taught women to sew clothing and produce needlework for sale.

The conference now includes 11 congregations with 516 members.

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- **High school breaks ground.** Christopher Dock Mennonite High School broke ground for a new activities center in October. The building will include a double gymnasium with locker rooms, four classrooms, a 200-seat theater for performing arts, and a fitness area. Board members, faculty, and students pulled ropes attached to an antique plow for the ground-breaking.

- **Editorial assistant dies.** Bertha Nitzsche, editorial assistant in the *Gospel Herald* office from 1953-66, died Dec. 20 at Schowalter Villa, Hesston, Kan. She was 94 years old. Nitzsche worked for *Gospel Herald* under the leadership of two editors, Paul Erb and John Drescher.

- **Book printed in Polish.** A Polish-language edition of *Meditations for the Expectant Mother* by Helen Good Brenneman will be printed by a Warsaw publisher, according to Herald Press director Paul Schrock. The original English edition is among the all-time best-sellers for Herald Press.

- **Sculpture approved.** The National Commission of Fine Arts "approved with enthusiasm" the "Guns into Plowshares" sculpture created by Esther Augsburger that will be placed in Washington, D.C. Augsburger, accompanied by architect Randy Seitz, met with the commission on Dec. 14.

- **Provident given award.** The Lancaster (Pa.) Provident Bookstore was named Region 2 Store of the Year by the Christian Booksellers Association. The region includes five states. The Lancaster store is now one of the finalists for CBA Store of the Year, to be announced at the international convention in Anaheim, Calif., this summer.

- **Camp marks 50th season.** Little Eden Camp in Onekama, Mich., completed its 50th season of camping this year. Little Eden was founded in the fall of 1944 by a group of Mennonites from northwest Ohio and has been a popular gathering place for Mennonite families from the midwest. It is owned and operated by Little Eden Camp Association and is a member of the Mennonite Camping Association.

- **Worship team begins.** Five Goshen (Ind.) College students will be available for weekend programs in churches from February through April 1996. The team offers worship leading and programs of drama, music, and testimony for adult and youth groups in church or conference settings. Scheduling can be arranged through Sheldon Burkhalter, director of church relations, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

- **Coming events:**

Family history conference, sponsored in part by Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, March 28-30. Don Yoder will lecture on Pennsylvania German folklife and Swiss contributions to Pennsylvania German culture. Twenty workshops and individualized genealogy consultations offered. More information and registration available from Lola M. Lehman, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Rd., Lancaster, PA 17602-1499; phone 717 393-9745.

- **New resources:**

'Act for Peace' brochures are available from Peace Factory. Six Mennonite service agencies are featured in the brochure that encourages church members to volunteer time for peacemaking. Free copies available from Peace Factory, Box 173, Orrville, OH 44667-0173.

Booklets about an Anabaptist understanding of faith development have been published by Faith & Life Press—*Children and Faith* by Cornelia Lehn, *Youth and Faith* by Abe Bergen, *Young Adults and Faith* by Ingrid Cornies, *Middle Adults and Faith* by Ken Hawkley, and *Older Adults and Faith* by Katie Funk Wiebe. Available from Faith & Life Press, 800 743-2484.

Directories of resource people are available from Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. Retreat, worship, and music leaders are suggested. Contact MBCM at 219 294-7523.

Earthquake kits are available from Mennonite Central Committee Supportive Care Services, British Columbia. Contains items such as candles, flashlight and batteries, blankets, and a first aid kit. The kits are prepared by people with mental, physical, and emotional disabilities who are learning job skills. To order a kit, call 800 622-5455.

Painting a liquor store into a sanctuary. *Westmoreland, N.B. (MBM)*—Jonathan Dean (right) and Rebecca Weller, members of a youth group from Ark Bible Chapel, Boyertown, Pa., paint a new sign for the Petitcodiac Mennonite Church, Westmoreland, New Brunswick, during a week spent transforming a liquor store into a church.

Planning calendars are available for congregations, including lectionary texts, hymnal suggestions, and special days in the Mennonite Church. To order, call Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries at 219 294-7523.

Video of New York City Mennonite convention is now available from Schwarmer Videos. Includes singing, testimonies, and a sermon by Ervin Stutzman. Available for $15 from Charles Kraybill, 76 Scribner Ave., Staten Island, NY 10301.

- **Job openings:**

Development director, Belleville (Pa.) Mennonite School. Responsible for fundraising and development program. Full-time position begins in July. Bachelor's degree preferred. More information available from Matt McMullen, 717 935-2184.

Manager, Ohio Mennonite Federal Credit Union, Kidron. Responsibilities include overseeing all credit union activities including personnel, marketing, customer relations, and implementation of policies, and preparing annual operating budget and for long-range planning. Full-time. Bachelor's degree in business or accounting required. Send résumé to OMFCU, PO Box 54, Kidron, OH 44636.

NEW MEMBERS

Bancroft, Toledo, Ohio: Tom Kauffman, Amy Kauffman, and Ross Kauffman.

Belmont, Elkhart, Ind.: Rhonda Smucker, Todd Smucker, and Susan Gotwals.

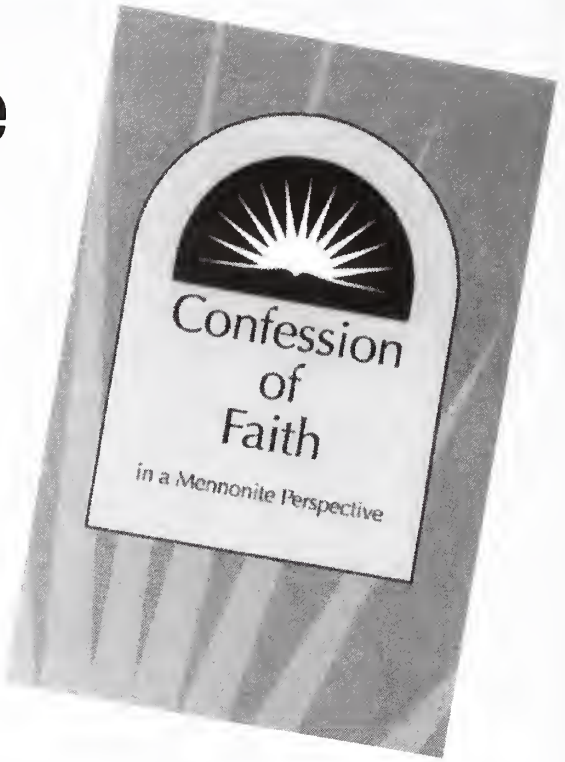
Berlin, Ohio: Jennifer Chupp, Brianne Hummel, Angela King, Melody King, Jeremy Miller, Tiffany Miller, Michael Mullet, Jeremy Patterson, Michael Troyer, Kellie Willison, and Arlene Rorick.

First, Indianapolis, Ind.: Carmela Martin.

Glade, Accident, Md.: Adam Brenneman, Dallas Brenne-

Preserving Our Faith

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective



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Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective was adopted at the delegate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church meeting at Wichita, Kansas, July 25-30, 1995. The 24 articles and summary statement were accepted by both groups as their statement of faith for teaching and nurture in the life of the church.

The confession of faith is arranged in four groupings:

- Articles 1-8 explore themes common to all Christian churches.
- Articles 9-16 examine the church and its practices.
- Articles 17-23 describe the life of discipleship.
- Article 24 clarifies the reign of God.

The commentary sections were endorsed as helpful clarification and illustrative application of the articles of the confession. The accompanying unison readings for use in worship are samples of the ways in which this confession can be used widely in the church.
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man, Travis Brenneman, Dana Diegert, Andy Holman, Matt Kauffman, Tony Maust, Andrea Opel, and Tina Opel.

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Upper Skippack, Skippack, Pa.: Rose Hoover, Brenda Krupp, Tim and Mary Kemmerer, Dennis McNeal, Bob Hoffman, Jon Hoover, Jill Fedorowicz, Anthony Reinford, Nate Clemmer, Brenda Delgado, Jason Landis, Eric Hackman, Marc Hendricks, Angela Kulp, Monica Freed, and Laurel Stoltzfus.

Valley View, Spartansburg, Pa.: Christine Chelton, Tracey Fielding, Bonnie Maker, John Wright, and Jean Wright.

Washington, D.C., Community Fellowship: Mike and Heather Boda, Laurie McClean, David Marks, Joseph Lapp, John Warner, and Eleanor Nagy.

BIRTHS

Brunsma, Yolanda Yoder and David, Mishawaka, Ind., Karina Rose (first child), Dec. 3.

Carrafiello, Deb Schwartzentruber and Jeff, New Hamburg, Ont., Justin Jeffrey (first child), Dec. 9.

Davis, Arminda and Alan, Clarence, N.Y., Zoe Elizabeth (fourth child), July 26.

Glick, Marci Ropp and Mark, Indianapolis, Ind., Rachel Elizabeth (third child), Dec. 12.

Herschberger, Tonya Raber and Terry, Nokomis, Fla., Chloe Anne (second child), Oct. 19.

Hostetler, Janice Leichty and Lynn, Kalona, Iowa, Reginald Jon (fourth child), Dec. 9.

Martin, Ginger Albrecht and Ron, Clarence Center, N.Y., Joel David (third child), April 8.

Miller, Pearl Esh and Kent, Belleville, Pa., Alan David (first child), Nov. 25.

Miller, Anita Hoover and John O., Sarasota, Fla., Joshua Michael (fifth child), Nov. 16.

Miller, Lynne Jantze and Roger B., Sarasota, Fla., Carson Dane (third child), Oct. 27.

Miller, Christine Mullett and Cary, Sarasota, Fla., Caris Rochelle (third child), Nov. 28.

Miller, Crystal Weiler and Denver, Sarasota, Fla., Houston Lee (first child), Oct. 25.

Peachey, Rosalie Zook and Brent, Reedsville, Pa., Dustin John (first child), Oct. 30.

Penner, Karen Huebert and Ivan, Peoria, Ariz., Alexandria Renee (third child), Dec. 1.

Raber, Karyl Wagner and Dennis, Phoenix, Ariz., Aaron Michael (first child), Nov. 12.

Risser, Tonya Graber and Eric, Glendale, Ariz., Mason Wayne (second child), Nov. 29.

Short, Tracy Troyer and Kelly, Phoenix, Ariz., Justin Paul (first child), Nov. 15.

Snyder, Cheryl Hertzler and Ron, Akron, N.Y., Elizabeth Rose (fourth child), Aug. 6.

Steinmann, Helen and Richard, Baden, Ont., Heather Janelle (fourth child), Sept. 25.

Swartz, Shannon Castle and Terry, Glendale, Ariz., Abigail Tate (second child), Nov. 2.

Warnick, Valerie Shahan and Eddie, Greenwood, Del., Wade Alan (third child), Oct. 26.

MARRIAGES

Brenneman—Ester-Bode: Michelle Brenneman, Indianapolis, Ind. (First) and Ulf Ester-Bode, Indianapolis, Ind. (civil ceremony, Germany, 1993), Aug. 19, by Ryan Ahlgrim.

Diegel-Londerville: Roberta Diegel, Hopedale, Ill. (Hopedale), and Alan Londerville, Hopedale, Ill. (Hopedale), Dec. 2.

Greer-Ramseyer: Christine Greer, Petersburg, Ont. (St. Agatha), and Timothy Ramseyer, New Hamburg, Ont. (Lutheran), Nov. 18, by Brent Kipfer.

Hershberger-King: Steven Hershberger, Indianapolis, Ind. (Silverwood), and Susan King, Indianapolis, Ind. (First), Sept. 9, by Ryan Ahlgrim.

Miller-Sauder: John D. Miller, Archbold, Ohio (Central), and Marla Sauder, Wauseon, Ohio (Central), Dec. 9, by John Horning and Wilmer Hartman.

DEATHS

Kauffman, Ardice Joyce Yoder, 60, Beavercreek, Ohio. Born: April 22, 1935, Archbold, Ohio, to Wilbur Yoder and Louella Miller Yoder Garrett. Died: Nov. 19, 1995, Beavercreek, Ohio, of a stroke. Survivors—husband: Charles F. Kauffman; children: Patti Adair, Rick, Michael, Lanée Reed, Chuck, Tim, Boonlum Singharat; mother; stepfather: Sam Garrett; brothers and sisters: Lois Hooley, Marva, Darrell, Ron, Lynn, and Doyle Yoder; 14 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 22, Tobias Funeral Home, by Paul Conrad. Burial: Huber Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Leatherman, Esther Moyer, 81, Colmar, Pa. Born: Aug. 10, 1914, Hatfield Twp., Pa., to Raymond A. and Edna Derstine Frankenfeld. Died: Nov. 25, 1995, of congestive heart failure. Survivors—children: Eileen Viau, Elaine Gibble, Sheila Doerr, Ronald Moyer; brothers and sisters: Ruth Landis, Samuel, Paul, and Earl Moyer; stepchildren: Margaret Myers, Marie Hange, Reda Litzinger, Della Gross, Howard D., Wilson D., Richard D., and Earl D. Leatherman; 8 grandchildren. Predeceased by: John G. Leatherman (second husband) and L. Ralph Moyer (first husband). Funeral and burial: Nov. 28, Deep Run Mennonite Church East, by Timothy D. Weaver and Arnold C. Roth.

Miller, Ruth E., 91. Born: Sept. 13, 1904, Mattawana, Pa., to Joshua K. and Sarah Miller Rittenhouse Harshbarger. Died: Nov. 10, 1995, Lewistown, Pa. Survivors—children: Clyde, Wayne, Marlin, John, Ivan, Mary Hoover, Esther Schuyler, Lena Heister, Betty Miller; brother and sister: David Harshbarger, Bertha Yoder; 21 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elmer Miller (husband). Funeral: Nov. 12, Mattawana Mennonite Church, by M. Leon Yoder. Burial: Pleasant View Cemetery.

Rich, Lester J., 82, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Jan. 16, 1913, Stuttgart, Ark., to John and Ellen Nofziger Rich. Died: Dec. 2, 1995, Wauseon, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Vivian Frey Rich; children: Barbara Murbach, John; sister: Olive Rich; 4 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 5, Zion Mennonite Church, by Dee Swartz and Ellis B. Croyle. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Shantz, Elam Wilbur, 75, Zurich, Ont. Born: April 11, 1920, to Norman and Elmina Weber Shantz. Died: Nov. 23, 1995, Exeter, Ont. Survivors—wife: Vera Ropp Shantz; children: Douglas, Gerald, Richard, Norma Iutzi, Nancy Gingerich; brother and sister: Mahlon, Seleda Steckle; 12 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 26, Zurich Mennonite Church, by Philip and Julie Bender and Ephraim Gingerich.

Smith, Marie V. Vance Bradfield, 78, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Dec. 26, 1916, Onego, W.Va., to Jason and Emmatie Vance. Died: Nov. 30, 1995. Survivors—children: Chester, Lorraine B. Good, Lois B. Payne; stepchildren: Priscilla Cooper, Reeta Clous, Eunice Gail Blizzard; brothers and sisters: Clyde, Bert, Harvey J., and Lucy Vance, Virgie Torkelson; 9 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren, 11 stepgrandchildren, 11 stepgreat-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Raymond Smith (second husband) and Gordon Bradfield (first husband). Funeral: Dec. 3, Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, by Wayne North and Harold Eshelman. Burial: Weavers Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Yoder, Mary K., 93. Born: May 20, 1902, Allensville, Pa., to Rufus H. and Annie C. Detweiler King. Died: Dec. 5, 1995, Lewistown, Pa. Survivors—children: Kathryn, Dorothy, Julia Kauffman, Stanford, Robert, M. Leon, Ted; 17 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Milo M. Yoder (husband). Funeral: Dec. 9, Mattawana Mennonite Church, by Mahlon Hess and Paul Bender. Burial: Pleasant View Cemetery.

CALENDAR

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Interterm begins, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 8

Mennonite Board of Education presidents' meeting, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 10

Mennonite Board of Education annual meeting and board meeting, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 11-13

School for Leadership Training, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 15-18

Vision: Healing and Hope implementation team, Los Angeles, Calif., Jan. 18

Atlantic Coast delegate meeting, Atglen, Pa., Jan. 20

Goshen College conference advisory board meeting, Goshen, Ind., Jan. 25-26

Goshen College board of overseers, Goshen, Ind., Jan. 26-27

AMBS Pastor's Week, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 29-Feb. 2

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A few old-fashioned cyberjitters

I'm not accustomed to considering myself old-fashioned. Twenty-somethings aren't supposed to be.

But when it comes to cyberspace, I admit I'm rather behind the times. I used e-mail for the first time four months ago, I've "surfed the Web" once, and the thought of explaining how any of it works makes me cringe.

In this issue's lead article, Stuart Showalter reports on some constructive uses of the Internet. He also offers helpful cautions as we navigate our way through cyberspace.

Challenging each other to responsible, loving, and measured use of the Internet may emerge as one of the larger tasks of the church in the coming years. Helping each other figure out how to handle this new technology, with all its potential for good and evil, can be a valuable exercise in accountability and community.

The potential for elitism. The information superhighway enables us to learn about cultures and thought patterns vastly different from our own. The information we obtain there can stretch us toward compassion and involvement in our ever-shrinking world.

But so far this is just for a few. Only those who own computers with modems or who have certain jobs can get on the information superhighway. A cornering-of-the-market on facts could lead to even larger gaps between the rich and the poor, the decision-makers and the decided-upon. Even as the network brings together a wide range of computer users, it can splinter our society further along educational and socio-economic lines.

Cyberspace is becoming a mission field for the intellectual elite—who need spiritual guidance and comfort as much as anyone. Many congregations are now posting service schedules, directions, pastor histories, and other information on the Internet. Let us be clear, however, that this virtual mission field has clearly-defined borders, and absorption in it can be one more way of distancing ourselves from the poor around us—from those whose frustrating reality is anything but virtual.

The potential for alienation. Conversations on computer forums like MennoLink are most often honest and thought-provoking. However, they are not *conversations.* The grins, hugs, and tears of face-to-face interaction cannot be duplicated. Reading words on a screen should never replace reading the love—or the hurt—in someone's eyes.

Along with possibility for stimulating "dialogue" on computer forums like MennoLink exists the potential for unparalleled nastiness. Sending scathing, hurtful messages across miles of cyberspace to someone we've never seen in a room somewhere we've never been is a lot easier than saying those same words to someone's face.

Providing alternatives to the violent and loner mentalities of our culture must be the goal of our congregations, not just creating home pages. Our churches must resolve to teach children more about taking meals to grieving families and volunteering money and time than about accessing the World Wide Web.

The potential for ignoring the "here." Time spent in cyberspace, no matter how many "places" we travel to there, is still time spent in one room and in front of one computer. It is time spent away from the *here* where we breathe and step and sniff and taste.

Cyberspace will never give us bird wings whirring above us or quivering rows of ripe corn. It cannot give us the sacred spaces of our ancestors or childhoods. Like any technology, the computer and its capabilities could further sever our fraying connection to the earth by prompting us to admire human invention rather than take care of divine creation.

I hope these fears are just old-fashioned and unfounded. When used in a healthy balance to other elements in our lives, the information network can connect people to valuable resources, help friends stay in touch with each other more easily, and expand the worlds of people confined to their homes. God can meet us in our own realities, even this new virtual one.

But may God protect us from ever using the Internet as a weapon, an escape, or an addiction. And may our eagerness to race on the information superhighway never supercede our concentration on the rocky and uneven path of the cross.—*vsw*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Two who spent their lives as overseas missionaries are Ruth and Charles Shenk, today living in Columbus, Ohio. Though the Shenks retired last year after serving 37 years in Japan, their influence lives on. See the editorial, "How to Be a Missionary" (page 16).

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Betty Hochstetler and Bill Derksen:
Carpets were red, carpets are blue 5

Scott Brubaker-Zehr:
Is overseas mission a thing of the past? 6

Hawk named vice president and academic dean at EMU 9

Fed up with war, Sudanese begin peace initiatives 11

Perspective from West Africa:

It's okay if you want to call me a 'missionary'

For many Mennonites today, missions is a touchy subject. Sensitive to the pluralism of the world, we don't want to be seen as taking our culture with the gospel.

by Nancy Frey

When I decided to spend a year in Benin, West Africa, as a mission intern with Mennonite Board of Missions, I made it quite clear that I did not want to be called a "missionary." The popular image of overseas missionaries is not a pretty one, especially among baby boomers. This is because of the role certain missionaries played in the colonization of Africa and of the fear that we will continue to impose our culture and our beliefs on another culture.

Today we are sensitive to the pluralism of our society and world and want to be tolerant and respectful of people with cultures, religions, and beliefs different from our own. We are also aware of the economic disparities in our world. We know that coming from the wealthy West, our views carry more weight than if we came from the poorer two-thirds world. When we interact in an intercultural situation, we don't want to bring along cultural baggage even if our overall message of God's love is good.

Further, Mennonites in particular are prone to respect other people, to want to listen to

We must not be arrogant. However, not to speak or engage in dialogue is to be unfaithful to God and unfair to our neighbors who want to get to know us.

them, and to understand them without judging them (unless they happen to be other Mennonites, of course!). For all these reasons, missions is often a touchy topic—unless it is directly linked to development or social justice.

Since my arrival in West Africa, my thinking has shifted. Many of these fears do not seem to reflect accurately Mennonite mission work in the 1990s. After all, mission workers are not the only ones changing the countries in which they work. The International Monetary Fund, World Bank, United Nations, and other global organizations have effectively cornered the market on transforming societies. Television, film, popular music, and other forms of media from the West also convey ideas, lifestyles, and value judgments that influence the countries which admit them.

The education system in Benin, for example, is based on a French curriculum. This ensures that the students in Benin know all the names of the rivers in France—but not the rivers in Benin.

The notion of the missionaries working hand-in-hand with the colonial powers to subdue the "natives" does not accurately reflect the reality of the late 20th century. Today missionaries more often try to counteract the cultural messages being sent from the West.

Ideally, missionaries see their work as a partnership with the local population so that the service and the sharing go both ways. A vital part of my role as a mission worker is to convey to North Americans what I have learned from living in a different culture. Hopefully someday we will bring people from other parts of the world to minister to us in North America instead of only sending our own people away. The only way we can learn from each other is by talking face-to-face.

Many people in Benin have told me that I am the first white person who has entered their home. How can dialogue possibly exist when Westerners are afraid or unwilling to meet with their African neighbors? I am grateful that as a mission worker I am able to dialogue with my contacts here.

What we can learn. When we see our culture through the eyes of others, we must recognize that there is much we can learn. We can learn that we all depend on other people and that our interdependence is a good thing. We can learn that we do not control all the circumstances in our lives, and that we are therefore dependent on God, who does have the ultimate control.

We can learn that not everything has a rational explanation and that forces of good and evil do operate in our world. We can learn to respect the wisdom of age and authority. We can learn that conformity, when it allows the community to live in harmony, is not always bad.

We can learn that sometimes personal relationships are more important than our work or than being on time for an appointment. We can learn to take time to greet one another and to acknowledge the presence of our neighbors and co-workers. We can learn to accept—or at least to tolerate—the presence of children in offices and other public places. We can learn that ultimately all human beings share certain fundamental features that unite us more than those things which distinguish us.

What we can teach. At the same time that we learn, we have some valuable things to teach. We can share certain values coming from our Christian faith, such as the importance of honesty and integrity in business dealings and the value of treating people fairly. We can encourage people to seek peaceful ways of resolving conflict. Our skills in mediation as well as our belief in the importance of forgiveness are worth sharing.

Mission workers can model roles that encourage husbands to value and respect their wives and fathers to share the responsibility in caring for their children. We can teach people about sanitation and nutrition while taking into account their spiritual health. By participating in service projects, mission workers teach the value of selflessness and caring about the well-being of others. In a world that values wealth and power, we can model the values of another kingdom.

In order to communicate these values, we have to understand and appreciate the culture in which we are working. But we also have to have a clear sense of who we are. When we try too hard to understand the other, we too often forget to define ourselves. Real dialogue is an exchange that requires us to listen, but also to speak—to try to see from the other's point of view, but also to articulate our own perception. We must not be arrogant or dogmatic. Those who are filled with the Spirit are humble; after all, who can claim to have seen God? However, not to speak or engage in the dialogue is to be unfaithful to God and unfair to our neighbors who want to get to know us.

Charles and Ruth Shenk share a meal in the home of Kazuo Tsuno north of Tokyo. Tsuno, head of air traffic controllers at one of Japan's major airports, recently left that position to begin a new Mennonite church in his home—fulfilling a life-long dream. Says Tsuno: "You sent me missionaries so I could learn to share Jesus with many people, and I thank you."

We do not impose our views, nor do we change people—only God can do that. Rather, we prepare the way for the Spirit to work in the person's heart. That does not mean that we should do a shoddy job of communicating the message and expect God to do the rest. Nor does it mean we should keep talking until the person agrees with us.

What we have to communicate is a God who

When we try too hard to understand the other, we too often forget to define ourselves. Dialogue requires us to listen—but also to speak.

is revealed through the Scriptures and who ultimately came to live among us. We can teach about a God who wants to have a loving, intimate relationship with us. Jesus has made that relationship a possibility by bridging the gap between us and God. In many religions, God remains distant, inaccessible, and difficult or even impossible to please. In a world controlled by fear, Christians place their trust in God who is ultimately in control—even over death.

Christianity gives dignity and worth to men, women, and children of any race and ethnic group without distinction. The gospel is truly good news to many who hear it for the first time. When people learn about what God has done for them, they are eager to learn more. There is a thirst and a hunger for Bible teaching among the Beninese that originates in the mission work of the Nigerian and Beninese Christians. As African Christians evangelize their fellow citizens, they look to the West—not for all the answers but for encouragement, support, and resources.

After all, we belong to the same family and community, and we should help each other. That is where missionaries (or mission workers) come in. Overseas workers teach, provide links to resources in the West, and engage in the dialogue that must occur if we are to learn from each other.

So despite the dangers, I think mission and evangelism are still needed in our world. And I will no longer object to being called a missionary!

Nancy Frey is a mission intern with Mennonite Board of Missions serving in Cotonou, Benin, where she assists with the Bible teaching program. She is a member of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church in Ontario.

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. . . . He will faithfully bring forth justice."—Isa. 42:1, 3b, NRSV

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READERS SAY

For some time now we have been watching with dismay the theological direction of the writers of *Gospel Herald*, our denomination, and our schools. We would like to believe that Bruce D. Martin's interpretation of 1 Kings 18 and 19 in the article, ***The Difficult Art of Listening*** (Dec. 12), is not representative of the Bible department at Eastern Mennonite University or the theological stance of *Gospel Herald* or the Mennonite Church. If it is, we are saddened.

We need more men today who, like Elijah, are willing to walk in God's Spirit, obey, and risk all so that people will cry out, "The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!" (1 Kings 18:39).

Walt and Jan Clinton
Casselton, N.D.

What a prophetic word from Ronald J. Sider in ***Loving People the Way Jesus Loved People*** (Nov. 21). Would that every Mennonite read it!

Sider's balance of seeing Jesus as both compassionate and truthful is the Jesus I read about in the Scriptures. As Sider says: "Too many Christians today wrongly think that compassion means you cannot condemn sin. . . . [Jesus] insisted that sin is a terrible violation of divine standards, even as he compassionately loved sinners."

Are we not hearing more and more in our circles that Jesus was primarily concerned with relationships rather than with truth and holiness?

Was Jesus hated and killed because he was so relational? Or was it because he was so truthful? Jesus told his brothers: "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil" (John 7:7).

Jesus' relational skills were zero when he cleansed the temple and turned away the rich young ruler. One of Jesus' "hard sayings" that we also need to consider is this: "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34).

I continue to be amazed at John's description of Jesus: "The Word became flesh . . . full of grace and truth." Grace and truth—they seem like such opposites. The paradox is that they portray fully my Lord. Jesus embodies both passionate compassion and uncompromising truth.

Would it be fair to say that we represent Jesus only to the degree that grace and truth are present together?

Eugene K. Souder
Grottoes, Va.

During World War II, I was a conscientious objector. I was grateful for the privilege I had of working on a farm. Several Mennonite fellows I knew decided to join the Armed Forces. As a result, they were excommunicated. Why are we different now? Why does Fred Beltram ("Readers Say," Dec. 19) have to look for another true peace church?

Continue on the right path.

Carroll Walter
Quakertown, Pa.

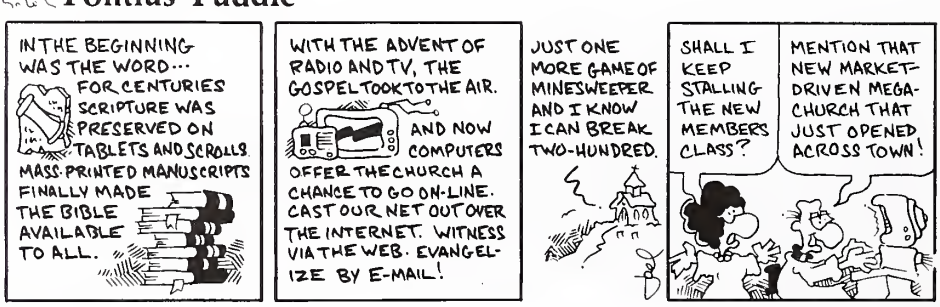
The Gift of Foot Washing (Dec. 19). This has been a controversial subject for me, particularly when I was attending my home congregation before moving to a retirement home.

Foot washing was important to me. But then panty hose came into vogue. I still wore hose that I could remove, but others did not. So the practice lost its meaning for me. As my husband said at the time, "You don't leave your gloves on when you wash hands!"

Foot washing means being servants to one another. As you note, washing each others' hands or polishing each others' shoes will never mean the same thing.

Mabel Bollman
Goshen, Ind.

Pontius' Puddle



Carpets were red, carpets are blue

Observations on the North American Mennonite church scene from two missionaries "home" for extended furlough.

by Betty Hochstetler and Bill Derksen

One of the best ways to observe change in any institution is to be away from that organization for a time. As mission workers on furlough, we have observed accelerated change in the North American Mennonite churches over the last five years. There are signs of life—and signs of decay. Each of these reflect something about our participation in God's kingdom. We do not want to make judgment calls; but rather we want to encourage our fellow sojourners as we all become aware of a truly global mission for our time.

A bit of trivia to begin with: carpets in Mennonite churches were red in the 1960s, tan in the 70s, green in the 80s, and blue-gray in the 90s! Not to be outdone by the carpets are the creative banners decorating our sanctuary walls. Children's departments are also full of color and equipment.

We've also noticed that most churches do not have regularly scheduled Sunday evening services any longer. They opt instead for a combination of small-group meetings, special features, and teaching sessions. Sunday school and worship are readily inverted, and adult classes are pulled together for common sessions. At the same time, dedicated teachers devote much time to teaching Sunday school. The new Jubilee Sunday school curriculum is being enthusiastically embraced.

Photocopiers, VCRs, and microwave ovens are among the indispensable tools that fill our church offices and kitchens. They parallel an increase in the number of professionals that staff the churches. Besides a pastor and custodian, many churches hire administrative assistants, youth pastors, ministers of music, Christian education staff, and counselors.

Multimillion-dollar facilities are on the rise. It seems significant that church boards also have to deal more and more with business matters. Larger budgets are required to maintain, secure, and insure the holdings. This contrasts sharply with many Mennonites in economically depressed areas, where food and shelter are the preoccupation.

In our church visits we have enjoyed much hospitality. Many people want to know about the church overseas. They pray faithfully for these churches. International travel is now commonplace, calling for less "show-and-tell" reporting from missionaries. Our mission agencies, along with Menno Travel Service and other organizations, sponsor various tours and service projects through which international contact can be made. International students in our colleges and seminaries provide opportunities for personal friendships to develop. Conferences and seminars promote awareness of areas in which Mennonite mission work is carried out. All of these are broadening our horizons and increasing our awareness of differences in culture, religious expression, and ways of communicating.

However, it is clear that the level of global awareness varies from person to person. We have encountered extreme cases in which defending the American flag seemed more important than celebrating the body of Christ which transcends all national loyalties. On the other hand, some people have made astute comments with regard to the need for globalization to take place at home. They cite making sound financial investments, knowing what we don't believe, attractively packaging our programs, and distrusting leadership as among the sprouting preoccupations that keep our scope of vision from expanding.

It goes without saying that North America is not the center of the universe. Gone are the days when we put maps on bulletin boards with strings fanning out to all the locations where we have mission work. These displays gave the impression that we had indeed spanned the globe with the gospel. But mission is not simply a geographical matter.

There are some pockets of nostalgia in the church that want to revive colonial-type mission expansion. These pockets also seem unwilling to welcome strangers, unknown situations, and unfamiliar foods. Mennonite World Conference hardly catches their attention.

Now is the time to look for the body of Christ in the world more than ever before. An awareness of God working through various channels in all cultures and our willing participation in that work is the mission of the church.

One way this global perspective can be fostered is by taking our international encounters very seriously. Business meetings, educational

(continued on page 8)

Is overseas mission a

Why mission? That question is a good way to get a lively conversation going—that is, if you can get people with different viewpoints together to talk.

by Scott Brubaker-Zehr

Recently I was invited to give a talk on the question, "Why mission?" That question seems to surprise people, sometimes for very different reasons.

Some think, "How could you ask such a question? We all know that mission is central to our identity and faith as a Christian community." These people are the ones I often meet and stay with on speaking visits to congregations.

There are others who are surprised by the question for quite different reasons. I don't often get a chance to talk with these people. They usually don't come out to the mission weekend events. They tend to think, "You mean some people still think we should be trying to convince others that our faith is the only true way? I thought we had moved beyond that sort of old-fashioned thinking in our church."

Why mission? The question is a good way to get a lively conversation going—that is, if you can get these different people together to talk about it. I've reflected on this question often as I try to make sense of my work for the past five years. It's a question I've tried to answer as I dialogue with my peers—many of whom are skeptical when it comes to mission. For them humanitarian service and community development are fine, but sharing your faith is a little suspect.

With this question come other doubts and questions about overseas mission. Some which I hear regularly are these:

1. Shouldn't we devote our energies to local needs? We live in an increasingly multicultural society in North America. We encounter economic and spiritual needs on our own doorstep. Why go elsewhere looking to do good when there is plenty to do right here at home?

2. Isn't cross-cultural ministry too costly and inefficient? It takes a big investment to prepare a family to serve overseas: language study, cross-cultural training, overseas travel, baggage, children's education costs, etc. After all these investments, the North American still has to minister across prohibitive cultural barriers. Is this really the best way to invest our resources? Wouldn't it be better just to send money for the Christians in that country to train their own people?

3. Don't missionaries set a bad example by living first world lifestyles in other countries? North Americans can't help but export their culture as well. Although it may not be their intention, they teach people to desire the comforts of Western culture. Their lifestyle contaminates the true Christian message. Wouldn't it be better to let the gospel be taught and lived by people native to the culture?

4. Why start Mennonite churches when there are other Christian groups already present? If there are Christian churches already present, what right do we have to promote our own denomination? Is this not simply fostering the divisions we have been guilty of producing?

5. Is Christianity the only true way to salvation? There are many people of different faiths who live as our neighbors in this society. They live morally upright lives and contribute to the common good. How can we respect other faiths and still claim that people need Jesus for salvation? Isn't this rather arrogant? What is wrong with diversity? Maybe God intended it this way.

These are serious and informed questions. We need to address them if we are to work in overseas mission. They are questions that I have asked myself. And this is how I have tried to respond:

1. We *do* live in a multicultural society with many needs. But this doesn't mean we should confine ourselves to our North American context. As Christians, we belong first to the church and second to our countries. The Mennonite church spans the globe. Just as our nuclear families visit their members when they are far away, so too we are called to visit back and forth with our sisters and brothers in other lands.

Relationship is reason enough to be involved in overseas mission efforts with partner churches. We have much to learn as well as much to give. We do have serious needs here, and we often gain a new perspective on them when we see the struggles of our sisters and brothers in the third world in the midst of much more difficult circumstances.

thing of the past?

2. Overseas mission is costly, but it's hard to put a price on relationships. Should we not maintain relationships with our family of faith because of cost? We could just send money, but how would *we* be transformed? How would we build a face-to-face partnership?

If we're worried about cost efficiency, we should ask ourselves some other questions as well. How does the North American church spend its money in other areas? What about our lifestyles? What about our building projects? What about our institutions? The Mennonite seminary in Colombia can support a full-time student for $390 (U.S). Here in North America it costs more than 20 times that much. Perhaps we should invest more money in overseas partnerships so that we can learn how to be more efficient with our money.

3. Missionaries do carry their culture with them. But anybody who goes anywhere does the same. It is no surprise to people in other countries that North Americans consume far more than their share of the world's resources. They know this apart from the lifestyles of mission workers.

If it's not right to live a North American lifestyle overseas, then it's not okay to live a North American lifestyle in North America either. We are global citizens and members of the international body of Christ. We dare not have a double ethic. We need to rub shoulders with our sisters and brothers in the third world so we can feel the disparities and begin to repent of our overconsumption.

4. Our goal should never be to promote our own denomination. Rather, the goal should be to proclaim and live the good news of the reign of God. As members of the broad Christian family, we have particular gifts to share. In Colombia, some groups are looking to Mennonites to provide insight and leadership in the teaching and practice of Christian nonviolence.

5. We do live in a wonderfully diverse world, and we are called to contribute by openly being who we are in Christ. As Christians, our motivation to share our faith doesn't come primarily because of a conviction that we have the only truth. Our desire to share comes rather from the liberating experience of Christ in our own lives. We share because Christ has been the way of salvation for *us*. We can never impose our faith. All God asks of us is that we humbly share out of what we have received—and that we sincerely listen to the faith and experiences of others.

Scott Brubaker-Zehr worked for three-and-a-half years with the Mennonite Church of Colombia in cooperation with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church. He worked in pastoral leadership and education for justice and peace. Today he lives in Waterloo, Ont., with his wife, Mary, and their two children.

Charles Shenk looks through a photo album and scrapbook given to him and his wife Ruth by the 500 members of the Japan Mennonite Church on their retirement in 1995 after 37 years of mission work in that country. "Shenk-san can speak Japanese very fluently," says a colleague of his in Japan. "That is a gift from God so that we can speak with him freely."

Desmond Tutu to head commission investigating apartheid atrocities

South Africa's president Nelson Mandela has named Desmond Tutu, the Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, to chair the 17-member Truth and Reconciliation Commission that will investigate atrocities committed during the former apartheid era. Tutu said that the commission's emphasis should not be on reprisal and retribution and that "South Africa cannot afford a Nuremberg-type situation"—a reference to the Nuremberg trials after World War II in which 24 Nazi leaders were accused of crimes against humanity.

The commission will investigate violations by members of both the apartheid state and liberation movements.—*Christian Century*

Survey shows large gap between rich and poor in the United States

The gap between rich and poor families with children in the United States is the largest among eighteen industrial countries rated in a new survey.

A Luxembourg income study found the average income for an affluent family of four Americans was $65,536, while the average for a poor family was $10,923. The difference—$54,613—represents a rich-poor gap almost $14,000 a year greater than the country with the next largest, Switzerland.

Among the eighteen countries in the study, poor American families were the poorest except for those in Ireland and Israel.—*Seeds*

Videotapes are the new tool of pastoral search committees

Hiring a minister is taking a new turn for some congregations these days. Search committees are using videotapes as "auditions" in narrowing the choices for a new pastor. While most don't rely solely on videos, some committee members say that using tapes cuts down on travel expenses.

Some search committees are also checking pastor's backgrounds on everything from police to financial records. "We do a complete background check on a prospective minister," says Jim Splawn, chair of the search committee of First Baptist Church in Huntsville. "It's sad it's that way, but we can't be too careful about who we choose."—*Christian Century*

Vatican says its ban on women priests will not be changed

The Vatican recently declared that its stand against the ordination of women is an infallible part of Catholic doctrine and therefore cannot be disputed or changed. The November statement makes it virtually impossible for a future pope to reverse the policy.

The statement is aimed to end ongoing debate about John Paul II's 1994 letter on women priests. It says that Catholics should see the letter applying "always, everywhere, and to all faithful."

"If this is indeed infallible, then a lot of Catholics are in trouble," said Frances Kissling, president of the U.S.-based Catholics for a Free Choice. The dissident group noted that polls say many Catholics approve of women priests, and said the move was potentially divisive.—*National and International Religion Report*

Carpets were red carpets are blue

(continued from page 5)

contacts, and youth exchanges can become natural points of contact between cultures. Congregations could send people into other churches in other cultures with the intention of participating in another group's congregational life. Similarly, our congregations could receive someone from a church community in another culture into our own congregational life and mission. These should not be seen as short-term projects but as shifts toward interconnectedness in which we become rooted in each others' faith journey.

Are we ready to receive missioning and to hear foreign accents among us, even from the pulpit? Participation in the kingdom is a global affair, whether the setting be local or overseas.

We offer these observations and thoughts in order to stimulate discussion and reflection—and as a way to help open our doors to God's global work of salvation. We must fight the virus of lethargy that prevents us from seeing a vision of partnership—a vision that will draw us closer to becoming an inclusive community in which people from this culture and from other cultures can work at our common mission. There may be nothing humanly attractive, easy, secure, comfortable, convenient, efficient, economical, or self-fulfilling about that mission. But it does belong to God's way of making peace.

Betty Hochstetler and her husband, Otis, have worked with the Associacao Evangelica Menonita and Mennonite Board of Missions in Brazil for 29 years. They visited MC churches in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana during a recent North American furlough.

Bill Derksen has worked as a Commission on Overseas Mission church planter and pastor with the Japan Christian Mennonite Church Conference since 1983. He has traveled to General Conference Mennonite churches across Canada and the United States on a one-year North America assignment.

The material for this article was first presented by the writers at a mission colloquium at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in May 1995.

Hawk named vice-president and academic dean of EMU

William J. Hawk

Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)—William J. Hawk will become vice-president and academic dean of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., on July 1, 1996. The appointment was announced by president Joseph L. Lapp.

Hawk is currently professor of humanities and associate professor of philosophy and religion at Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio. He previously served as vice-president and academic dean at Bluffton (Ohio) College from 1990-94, where Lee F. Snyder has been named president-elect. Hawk is Snyder's successor at EMU.

"Dr. Hawk brings a vision for strong academic programs, skill in shaping and promoting that vision, excellent teaching gifts, administrative experience, and an understanding of the Anabaptist-Mennonite way which he has chosen for himself," says Lapp.

A native of Lima, Ohio, Hawk graduated from Bluffton College with a degree in philosophy. He earned a master's degree in religion from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and master's and doctorate degrees in philosophy from Vanderbilt University.

Hawk taught at St. Mary's College at Notre Dame from 1978-87. He taught philosophy courses at Blue Ridge Community College and James Madison University and was the first director of enrollment management at EMU before joining the Bluffton College faculty.

Hawk has received several teaching and research fellowships and has contributed articles to various periodicals.

He is married to Jean Roth Hawk, professor of education at Bluffton College. They have two children.

Council of leaders discuss membership

Chicago, Ill. (Meetinghouse)—Membership, baptism, and the international church highlighted the conversations at the meeting of the Council of Moderators and Secretaries on Dec. 1-2. Organized in 1973, the group meets once a year to look at issues that concern Brethren, Mennonite, and Brethren in Christ groups.

After a day of reports from each of the denominations, Helmut Harder of the General Conference Mennonite Church raised the question of how to respond to people who were baptized as infants and did not want to be rebaptized. "We have a long way to go toward understanding baptism in all its meanings—water, Spirit, and blood," Harder said.

"At what point are we prepared to be exclusionary?" asked Harvey Sider of the Brethren in Christ.

In other business, the group began work on a subtheme for one of the days of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly in Calcutta in 1997. Phyllis Pellman Good of the MWC executive committee said that two questions are important to consider in planning the theme: what do North Americans want to say to the rest of the worldwide church, and what do we need from the rest of the church.

Members also heard from representatives of the Missionary Church, which is exploring joining the council, and referred a proposal for an inter-Mennonite response to ecumenical peace agenda to the Mennonite Central Peace Committee for further discernment.—*Gordon Houser*

Rich Rohrer (left), Tim Leaman, and Aaron Wenger intercede for peace on the roof of their house in Philadelphia. They are members of Stephen's House, a community of six university students.

Mennonite students create 'resting place' in city

Philadelphia, Pa. (EMM)—"We want to see God release his power to work in this neighborhood which is often known for its racial violence," says Tim Leaman, co-leader of Stephen's House in inner-city Philadelphia.

Leaman is one of six Mennonite college and graduate students living in a Disciples House, a new program of Discipleship Ministries (DM) of Eastern Mennonite Missions. They live in a three-story row home on 17th Street and Diamond Street with the goal of being a presence for peace in the community.

"I have a sense that prayers of intercession and simply being a Christian presence will be the way God chooses to work here," Leaman says. "Having Christians present in areas like this is very important in the way God is leading."

The students attend universities in the city, majoring in everything from history and music therapy to medicine and computer science. They meet three mornings a week for prayer and one evening a week for worship. The group came up with the name "Stephen's House" from Acts 7:49: " 'What kind of house will you build for me?' says the Lord. 'Or where will my resting place be?' "

"We want to create a household that will be a resting place for the Lord," says Leaman. "And out of that we'd like to enable rest and healing to flow into our community and world."

Leaman and Rich Rohrer, co-leaders of the house, say they had been praying about the problems of violence and crime in the city for months. They talked with directors at DM and Leaman's father, who agreed to purchase a house if the students paid rent.

According to DM director Galen Burkholder, Stephen's House is the first Disciples House to begin operating. They are to be communities of college and graduate students who are alumni of DM programs.

—*Julie Hershey*

Grief and anger result from encounters with police

Philadelphia, Pa.—Last year Gerald Anderson, age 26, died of stab wounds in Philadelphia County's Holmesburg Prison. A trustee, he had irritated another prisoner by enforcing the prison's telephone time limits. Ironically, his conviction and life sentence for a murder that his family members say he didn't commit had just been overturned by a judge.

"Our grief is mixed with our anger and sense of powerlessness," says Gerald's stepfather Conrad Moore, a member of Word of Joy Community Church of Franconia (Pa.) Conference. "Nobody seems to notice—it's not a big deal to anybody that the legal system is not fair to minority persons."

Corruption in Philadelphia's 39th police precinct seems to be partly responsible for Anderson's misguided sentence. The scandal broke in the news media on Anderson's birthday, and the publicity resulted in fifty people, most African-American and Hispanic, being released from prison after it became apparent they had been framed by police eager to make convictions. Another 1,100 cases will be reviewed. "Black people are full of anger, frustration, hurt, and fear—not about slavery but about their present powerlessness," says Moore, director of Liberty Ministries in Schwenksville, Pa., which mentors Christians newly released from prison. The ex-prisoners who come through Liberty Ministries spend about five months in the program, and Moore says they stress Bible study and personal devotion time as a way of dealing with the anger and fear the men feel.

"In our cities there are bad policemen literally getting away with murder," says Moore. "I am afraid because the church is so conspicuously silent on this issue. It makes minority people feel the issues that directly affect our lives don't concern the church."

Moore says he has experienced racism numerous times in his life. When he was 17, police officers falsely accused him and a friend of burglarizing a house. The young men were only held overnight, but it was long enough to disillusion Moore.

Today, he and his wife Teresa face another round of anger—this time because of their son's death.

"People outside the system need to yell," Moore says. "My pie-in-the-sky hopes are that white churches will reach out and embrace black churches. They will tell them 'we see it. We see what is happening, and we are angry too. We stand beside you in prayer.' "

Gerald Anderson

He says that the mostly-white Word of Joy congregation has offered them much-needed support during this time. "It shows us what God meant by sending a comforter through the body—he provides an arm around the shoulder in the flesh through my brothers and sisters."—*Mary Lou Cummings, reprinted from* Franconia Conference News

Vietnamese Mennonite church allowed to gather

Saigon, Vietnam (EMM)—After being scattered for nearly 20 years, members of the Evangelical Mennonite Church here have gathered for worship.

According to pastor Nguyen Quang Trung, the first service was held in a "warm, happy atmosphere."

The church members will meet in homes until their church building is returned from the government. Vietnamese authorities have informed several churches in Saigon and the vicinity that their confiscated buildings will be returned shortly.

More than 200 members were meeting in the Mennonite church before it was confiscated under the communist regime that took control in 1975. Most church members have been worshiping in other churches since that time.

Eastern Mennonite Missions church planters served in Vietnam from 1957 to 1975, when the government asked Mennonite workers to leave.

Trung asks Christians to pray for the church. "We ask you to support us as we begin to rebuild the work of God amid many difficulties," he says.

Trucking firm combines business and charity

New Hamburg, Ont. (MCC Canada)—When Vernon and Viola Erb started Erb Transport Limited in 1959, they didn't expect to see their family business expand to 300 tractor trailer units, 500 refrigerated trailers, and 150 straight delivery trucks.

They also didn't expect their business to gain a reputation as the Ontario trucking firm which is sympathetic to charitable causes.

The commitment to charity started when the Erb business transported used clothing and other shipments to the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) warehouse in Akron, Pa., says president and general manager Vernon Erb.

"There are so many needs," he says. "Those of us who have the ability to donate time and equipment should be willing to do that."

In recent years the main charitable shipments have been crafts produced by artisans in the developing world which are sold by Selfhelp Crafts of the World, he says. One of Erb's most recent contributions was transportation of used clothing and other supplies to the U.S. for shipment to the former Yugoslavia.

Erb Transport Limited also provides refrigerated units for storing fresh meats and produce at the annual New Hamburg MCC relief sale in May.

MCC isn't the only beneficiary of Erb's commitment. They have moved household goods for church workers, transported clothing to communities in northern Canada for various charitable organizations, and transported food to Ontario food banks.—*Gladys Terichow*

Sudanese fed up with war and begin work on peace

Akobo, Sudan (MCC)—An 11-person delegation from the Akobo Presbyterian Church recently set off on a walk for peace.

The walk was not purely symbolic. The delegation's goal was to meet and talk with those from the neighboring clan responsible for the latest cycle of killings.

"We are starting with the grassroots, with the [Nuer] people themselves. Later we will go to the Dinka and to faction leaders," says Peter Gai Lual, leader of the Akobo peace delegation. "Local people are fed up with this war."

Something new is in the air in war-torn southern Sudan. Several years ago Christians gave vague answers to questions about what the church was doing to make peace, often emphasizing international efforts or high-level negotiations with factional leaders. Today various peace initiatives like the Akobo delegation are happening at a local level.

Over the past five years Sudan has been one of the highest recipients of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) material resources. The civil war has taken thousands of lives and displaced most of the southern population.

Peter Gai Lual (in black, center) leads the Akobo peace delegation in Sudan.

The war has several dimensions. The government, representing the more Arabic and Muslim population of northern Sudan, is trying to impose strict Islamic law on the South, whose population is largely African and increasingly Christian. Splits have occurred among rebel factions in the South, leading to massacres that often involve civilians. Traditional ethnic and regional conflicts also add to the violence.

Over the past year the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), MCC's partner in southern Sudan, has been encouraging local peace initiatives. "We are trying to teach Jesus' teachings on peace, and that they are to apply here and now. People haven't heard that before," says NSCC staffer Louise Reiman. "Our task is to introduce Jesus' idea of loving the enemy, then to stay out of the way as [local people] run with it."

The NSCC has supported various local delegations, prayer services, and workshops on biblical principles and the practice of peace. One peace conference attracted several thousand people, some walking hundreds of miles to attend.

Earlier this year a conference in Ikotos resulted in a call for "peace scouts"—young men from various villages designated to keep peace and solve problems. According to Bishop Paride Taban of the Diocese of Torit, the peace scouts idea came from a traditional practice in which respected men were designated *monyomiji* or "village protectors."

'Village protectors' learn peace. In this new adaptation, villages are currently designating young men to undergo peacemaking training and spiritual discipline. They will serve as a "bridge between villages," working out problems without resorting to weapons, says Taban.

MCC has contributed $3,000 (U.S.) to the peace scouts initiative. Church women are also assuming a peacemaking role (see story at left).

Peace efforts at the leadership levels have not stopped. But many church leaders like Bishop Taban have shifted their emphasis to working with local people. "Since last year, I've done 90 times more than when I was going for peace talks in Nairobi [Kenya]," Taban says.—*Howard Zehr*

Women in Sudan take on challenge of peacemaking

Akobo, Sudan (MCC)—Women may hold the key to peace, say some southern Sudanese.

"Women are by nature peacemakers. They have a heart of understanding that won't accept children and elders being killed," says Rebecca Joshua Akwaci, an organizer of the Mennonite Central Committee-supported Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace (SWVP).

Suzanna Aluel Mohammed of Sudan: "I am willing to go anywhere to talk peace."

A group of displaced Sudanese women living in Nairobi formed SWVP in 1994. Since then, the women have sponsored various events including training workshops and meetings with leaders. A seminar in March 1995 brought together women and chiefs from Sudan to explore mutual concerns.

"Women can be peacemakers in our community—not by standing with a gun but by teaching peace. We can be on the borders, encouraging peace, talking about reconciliation instead of revenge," says Akwaci. "If we are scattered, we are not strong. But if we are together, and from diverse ethnic and political backgrounds, we have strength."

Some women seem to be developing a similar vision. Suzanna Aluel Mohammed, leader of the Catholic Women's Association in Mapourdit, says, "We want to collect women from all the factions and groups to meet and to talk about peace. I am willing to go anywhere, to Khartoum, to the Upper Nile, to talk peace. If God calls me, I will go.

"If we go to Khartoum [Sudan's capital] and they arrest us and hold us prisoners, I am willing because it is the way of peace," she says. "If it means that women must be killed in order to stop the fighting, we will accept that."—*Howard Zehr*

MCC helps Colombian Mennonites to aid the Wayúu in medical emergency

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Colombian Mennonites are responding to a medical emergency striking the indigenous Wayúu population in the country's northernmost Guajira peninsula that juts into the Atlantic Ocean.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is financially assisting the church's efforts with a grant of $15,000 (U.S.)—one-fifth of the project's total cost. Due to poverty and lack of health and sanitation systems, the Wayúu have been particularly hard hit by equine encephalitis, a mosquito-borne disease. Without prompt treatment, primarily fluid rehydration and fever control, the illness is deadly, particularly to the young and very old. Survivors may experience deafness and/or paralysis.

Mosquitoes are rampant this year during the heaviest rainy season of the past 20 years. The terrain is flat and without adequate sewerage, rain mixes with waste water and collects in stagnant pools that create ideal mosquito-breeding grounds. Other factors like untreated drinking water, animals and humans sharing the same water sources, lack of vaccinations for both animals and people, and severe malnutrition contribute to the disease's spread and severity.

While the *New York Times* estimates some 300 deaths already, Colombian Mennonites say accurate figures are impossible to come by; the Wayúu population is geographically spread out over rural territory, and they do not report deaths to the government.

The Colombian Mennonite Church has sent Dr. Ivan Benavides and two nurses from Bogota to the Maicao municipality in the affected region to work with indigenous health promoters to combat the illness. They are working alongside a Mennonite congregation, the Riohacha Mennonite Church.

"It will be necessary to visit home by home to treat affected persons and to speak to them about sanitary precautions to avoid the disease's spread and about how to look for help when they need it. This work will require time, effort, and commitment," say Gustavo Angulo and Peter Stucky, leaders of the Colombian Mennonite Church. The medical team plans to remain in the region for an estimated three months.—*Emily Will*

Congregation in Spain becomes Mennonite

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—A congregation in Burgos, Spain, recently adopted the name "Comunidad Evangelica Menonita de Burgos"—Burgos Evangelical Mennonite Fellowship. This is the latest step in the 20-year evolution of this congregation.

In the early 1970s, Luis Alfredo Diaz, a young Uruguayan artist, was sent to Spain by a Finnish Pentecostal mission to assist their missionary in Burgos with youth work. Diaz soon broke with the Pentecostal mission and began to work with Roman Catholic parishes in what soon became a wildfire movement toward Christ among Burgos teens.

In the early 1980s, by invitation of Diaz and Gallardo, Dennis and Connie Byler and family were sent to Burgos by Mennonite Board of Missions. Since then, Bylers have served this group in a variety of capacities. In the mid-1980s, with Diaz gone and the group expelled from the Roman Catholic Church, Bylers were instrumental in helping the remnants of this youth movement evolve into a viable congregation with a solid biblical foundation. Dennis Byler was appointed pastor of this congregation, a position he held for several years while training the current pastors, Agustin Melguizo and Nicolas Menendez.

History of involvement. Pastors Melguizo and Menendez strongly felt a need for this congregation to be a part of something larger than the local congregation. Given the history of Mennonite involvement with this church, there was an important sense of identification and commonality with Anabaptist-Mennonite themes. Melguizo is hoping to prepare further for pastoral ministry at a Mennonite school in the U.S. beginning next year.

In addition to the Byler family, MBM has also sent other short-term and voluntary service personnel over the years.

This is the second Mennonite congregation to emerge in Spain with close ties to the Mennonite Church by way of MBM. The other is in Barcelona. In Spain there is also a small congregation of Mennonite Brethren, and a Brethren in Christ mission, both in Madrid.

Comunidad Evangelica Menonita de Burgos has 46 baptized and active members, mostly young families with about 25 children. Attendance Sunday mornings stands at about 80. This congregation is the home of Accorema, a ministry headed by Jose Gallardo. Accorema runs a rehabilitation center for drug addicts, a prison ministry, a spiritual retreat house in the mountains near Burgos, and a home for people dying of AIDS.

School supplies delivered. *Shustar, Iran (MCC)*—The two Iraqi refugee children shown here said "thank you" in English to two Mennonite Central Commitee staff members who distributed school kits prepared by Mennonites in British Columbia. More than 3,000 Iraqis remain in the Shustar refugee camp in Iran as a result of the 1991 Persian Gulf War and ongoing political turmoil in Iraq.

Christine Lindell Detweiler (left), Rachel Hollinger-Janzen, and Nancy Frey participate in an Easter foot washing service on a West African beach.

'Tricked' by God, teacher vows to return to her work in West Africa

Cotonou, Benin (MBM)—As Nancy Frey sees it, there's a simple explanation for her desire to return to Benin for a long-term assignment at the end of a 15-month mission intern experience: "God tricked me."

With a master's degree in comparative literature and six years of high school teaching behind her, the 33-year-old Frey, from St. Jacobs, Ont., is not the typical Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) mission intern. But then a claim to being duped by God does not make for the typical story.

Unwilling to commit herself to more than one year of service in this small, impoverished West African country, Frey nonetheless shelved her dream of an international vacation and flew to Cotonou, Benin, in September 1994.

Call to ministry. "I had felt a call to ministry but wanted an interlude between the end of my teaching career and a period of theological training," Frey says. "I had thought the best thing would be to travel, to see several continents."

She says that it was a selfish dream. "A call is an immediate thing, not something you put off until your agenda allows it," Frey says. So she contacted MBM in spring 1994 and prepared several months later to leave for Benin.

As a young adult, Frey had little concern for the church. "I was pretty cynical," she says. Until the age of 24, when she found herself immersed in literary studies at the University of Toronto, Frey had "little interest in the church, in God, or Christians in general."

Finding new interest in Christ. Three things affected her faith and, in retrospect, her vocation during that year: the post-conversion poetry of T. S. Eliot; the presence of an intelligent, insightful classmate who was also a committed Christian; and the ordination of a woman in her home congregation. Frey had discovered that intellectuals could find meaning in Christianity and that the pastoral gifts of a close female friend were valued by the church.

"It was at that point that I read through the New Testament and found new interest in the life and teachings of Christ," she says.

In 1992, after six years of teaching French, Frey felt the Lord calling her to something else. She says she heard a voice tell her, "Feed my sheep."

Frey believes it was the voice of God. "All I really know is that it was not my own," she says. "I understood right away that it was a call to ministry."

Increasingly involved in the life of her home congregation, Frey worked to discern where God was leading her. She decided to leave her teaching post and travel for a year before beginning studies at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

But, as is often said in West Africa, "We make our plans, but it's God who has the last word."

Joy in spite of hesitancy. "From the moment I landed in Cotonou, I had a feeling of peace and joy," she says. This came despite her hesitancy about Benin and about how her role during the coming year would materialize. "I didn't feel like my gifts could be used and recognized in this context," she says, alluding to the traditional West African understanding of the woman's place in society and in the church.

With the help of MBM's team in Benin, Frey found ways in which her gifts could be tapped. She prepared 25-page course summaries (in French) every five weeks for a Bible seminar. In December, she began collecting and writing local folk tales (she now has written 15). In February, she made the first of numerous visits to the villages of seminar students who are re-teaching the courses they take in Cotonou. Such visits led her to teach two courses herself and also sparked several preaching invitations. Finally in March, she began her involvement with a group of six handicapped women working to start a ministry with other handicapped women in the city.

Frey prolonged her stay in Benin to 15 months. Having come with a vision to minister in North America, she leaves Cotonou with the intention of studying theology for two years and then returning to West Africa for a minimum of four years.

Going with a long-term vision. "So that's why I say God tricked me," she says. "God said, 'You don't want to go for three years, so I'll just send you for one—but you'll come back with a long-term vision.' "

Frey says that she feels more at home in Benin than in North America. The church is vibrant and growing, personal relations are emphasized, and few hold illusions about being in total control of life's twists and turns.

"The peace that I felt when I arrived has remained constant. There's a real sense of calm in knowing God is with you," she says.

—*Tim Swartzendruber*

Groceries as ministry of compassion. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Members of Iglesia Menonita Ebenezer unload grocery bags for distribution to needy people in the Bronx, New York City. Each year churches and conferences in the East Coast region of Mennonite Central Committee assemble some 6,000 bags for distribution through churches in New York City, Philadelphia, and Lancaster, Pa.

- **Peace center wins prize.** The Mennonite Central Committee-supported Palestinian Center for Rapprochement in the West Bank town of Beit Sahour has been awarded the 1995 Pfeffer Peace Prize. The prize, sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, includes a monetary award and is given to individuals or groups who try to build structures of peace by nonviolent means. The center began in 1988 and facilitates ongoing dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

- **Book printed 43rd time.** Herald Press has ordered another 10,000 copies of the *More-with-Less Cookbook* by Doris Janzen Longacre. This 43rd printing takes the book to 617,500 copies in print. It was first released in 1976 in cooperation with Mennonite Central Committee with a concern for limited world food resources.

- **Home accredited.** Mennonite Home in Lancaster, Pa., recently received approval from the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission (CCAC) in Washington, D.C. CCAC is affiliated with the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aged. The accreditation is based on a self-study and uses the criteria of general operations, financial stability, long-range planning, and the relationship of the administrative team to the board. This was the first year Mennonite Home was eligible for the accreditation because of its recent addition of independent living facilities.

- **Donations accepted.** The Mennonite Church General Board is inviting individuals and congregations to help the board and associate groups end this year with balanced budgets. Jan. 31 is the final day of business this year for the groups, who need a total of $1,030,000 in contributions to balance their budgets. Checks can be made payable to Mennonite Church General Board, 421 S. 2nd, Suite 600, Elkhart, IN 46516, or sent directly to other groups—Board of Congregational Ministries, Board of Missions, African-American Mennonite Association, Hispanic Mennonite Convention, and United Native Ministries.

- **Starting a men's network.** Following a men's seminar at Wichita '95, some expressed interest in developing a Mennonite Church men's network. Persons interested in such a network are invited to respond to two questions: (1) if you have an active men's group at your church, send the name of the church and an outline of the group's purposes and activities; (2) if you encourage the formation of a church-wide men's organization, send your name and the name of the church you attend. Responses can be sent to Kurt Horst, 116 Arbutus Ave., Johnstown, PA 15904.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Eric Horst was installed as associate pastor of Cornerstone Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio, on Dec. 6.. His new address is 235 Lake Ave. #35, Hartville, OH 44632.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Richard Keeler of Harrisonburg, Va., was appointed to a three-year term as resource person to Trinidad Mennonite Church with Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions.

Stanley and Carol McMahon of Belfast, Northern Ireland, were appointed to a one-year assignment in Termini Imerese, Sicily, with Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions.

- **Coming events:**

11th annual convention of Council on Church and Media, Toronto (Ont.) Colony Hotel, May 30-June 1. Speakers at "Exploring the Internet" will offer basic and advanced information about the information superhighway and discuss social and ethical implications of the new electronic culture. More information available from Dave Linscheid, 316 283-5100.

Dancing at the Table: Re-imagining the Church, sponsored by Supportive Congregations Network (SCN), North Manchester, Ind., June 28-30. SCN is a network of congregations that support lesbian, gay, and bisexual members. More information available from 612 305-0315.

- **New resources:**

Display on Sudanese Christians is available from Mennonite Central Committee. Includes quotes and portraits of Sudanese Christians whose faith has been tested during 40 years of civil war. Order the two-table display from MCC at 717 859-1151.

Stories by Peter and Elfrieda Dyck are now available in a two-part video series from Mennonite Central Committee. Includes stories of MCC's beginning and of a sea voyage with refugees from Europe to South America after World War II. Contact MCC at 717 859-1151.

- **Job openings:**

Receptionist and reservationist, Lakewood Retreat, Brooksville, Fla. Qualifications include computer experience and organizational, phone, and people skills. Send résumé to Lakewood Retreat, 25458 Dan Brown Hill Rd., Brooksville, FL 34602, by Jan. 31.

Secretary, Refton (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church. Part-time. Some computer experience required. Call 717 786-3008 for an application or send résumé to Refton Brethren in Christ Church, 110 Church St., PO Box 68, Refton, PA 17568.

NEW MEMBERS

Friendship, Bedford Heights, Ohio: John Kresse and Gizella Tapolyai.

North Suburban, Mundelein, Ill.: Nathan and Robin Arn.

Upper Skippack, Skippack, Pa.: Rose Hoover, Brenda Krupp, Tim Kemmerer, Mary Kemmerer, Dennis McNeal, Bob Hoffman, Jonathan Hoover, Jill Fedorowicz, Anthony Reinford, Nate Clemmer, Brenda Delgado, Jason Landis, Eric Hackman, Marc Hendricks, Angela Kulp, Monica Freed, and Laurel Stoltzfus.

BIRTHS

Fahndrich, Sheila McManama and Steve, Aumsville, Ore., Meghyn Marie (second child), Nov. 23.

Gingerich, Karen Schnarr and Brad, Baden, Ont., Melanie Anne (second child), Nov. 7.
Gongwer, Judi Beck and Steve, Elkhart, Ind., Jacob Daniel (second child), Dec. 10.
Tiedge, Jennifer York and Mike, Elkhart, Ind., Brooke Angela (first child), Dec. 5.
Yoder, Beth Mishler and Jeff, Goshen, Ind., Whitney Nicole (third child), Dec. 2.

MARRIAGES

Bontrager-King: Maria Bontrager, Nappanee, Ind. (North Main Street), and Jeff King, Wakarusa, Ind. (Missionary), Dec. 16, by Ken Bontreger and Dave Dyck.
Hershberger-King: Steve Hershberger, Elkhart, Ind. (Silverwood), and Susan King, Indianapolis, Ind. (First), Sept. 9, by John W. King and Ryan Ahlgrim.
Johnson-Wilson: Vicki Johnson, Salem, Ore. (Western), and Rodney Wilson, Salem, Ore. (Western), Dec. 2, by Dave Stutzman and Jane Wolf.
Jones-Shantz: Marcia Jones, Don Mills, Ont., and Steven Shantz, Don Mills, Ont. (Wilmot), Sept. 9, by Mike Mills.

DEATHS

Bechtel, Mildred Reynolds, 79, Goshen, Ind. Born: Dec. 26, 1915, Oxenhill, N.J. Died: Nov. 26, 1995, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Elmer Bechtel; children: Melva Sanders, Eva, Arlene Hartsough, Pauline Graff, Jay; brothers and sisters: Eva, Samuel J., William H., and Robert A. Reynolds; 9 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: First Church of God. Funeral: Nov. 30, Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, by Art Smoker and John F. Murray. Burial: Clinton Brick Cemetery.

Beyeler, Floyd D., 85, Orrville, Ohio. Born: Oct. 27, 1910, Orrville, Ohio, to Alfred J. and Elizabeth Geiser Beyeler. Died: Nov. 27, 1995, Orrville, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Martha E. Rohrer Beyeler; daughters: Anna Mae Hostetler, Irene Lepley, Janet Nussbaum; 6 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 29, Crown Hill Mennonite Church, by Bill Detweiler.

Boshart, Lloyd, 82, Lowville, N.Y. Born: Aug. 3, 1913, Baden, Ont., to Eli and Katherine Kennel Boshart. Died: Dec. 4, 1995, Lowville, N.Y. Survivors—daughters: Ruth Ann Roggie, Martha Boshart, Beth Steria, Mary Honer; brothers and sisters: Clayton, Edgar, Glen, Sanford, David, Gloria Helmuth, Brenda Hunkinsons; 2 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Naomi Mosher Boshart (wife). Funeral: Dec. 7, Lowville Mennonite Church. Burial: Croghan Mennonite Cemetery.

He was ordained a minister Nov. 20, 1938, and served as a bishop in the Conservative Mennonite Conference.

Frey, J. Harold, 80, Lititz, Pa. Born: April 11, 1915, East Donegal Twp., Pa., to Elias T. and Fannie D. Shenk Frey. Died: Dec. 10, 1995, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—wife: Vera Brubaker Frey; children: Herbert, Harold, Janet Weber, Nancy; brothers and sisters: Paul, Wilbur, Elias, Martin, Claude, Dorothy, Mary Ritchie, Erma Schnabel, Nancy Longenecker, Lois Frey; 11 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, 4 step-grandchildren, 3 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 14, Mount Joy Mennonite Church, by Joe Sherer and Shelley Shellenberger. Burial: Kraybill Mennonite Cemetery.

Glick, Cody Douglas, one month, Wakarusa, Ind. Born: Nov. 4, 1995, South Bend, Ind., to Mike and Diane Yoder Glick. Died: Dec. 3, 1995, South Bend, Ind. Survivors—parents; grandparents: Glenn and Carolyn Yoder and Irvin and Nelda Nussbaum. Funeral: Dec. 5, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, by Wesley J. Bontreger. Burial: Yellow Creek Mennonite Church North Cemetery.

Kauffman, Ernest R., 82, Belleville, Pa. Born: April 17, 1913, to John R. and Mattie Harshbarger Kauffman. Died: Dec. 2, 1995, Belleville, Pa. Survivors—wife: Jean Zimmerman Kauffman; children: Ernest, Jr., Kenneth, Beverly Peachey, Roberta Benn, brothers and sisters: Donald, Blanche Yoder, Grace Miller; 10 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 5, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by Ivan E. Yoder. Burial: Locust Grove Cemetery.

Summer School at AMBS

June 3-14

Anabaptist Spirituality
C.J. Dyck, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, AMBS

Religious and Psychological Assessment
Ruth Lesher, Ph.D., clinical psychologist, Lancaster, Pa.

Isaiah
Ben Ollenburger, Ph.D., Professor of Biblical Theology, AMBS

June 17-28

Revelation of John
J. Nelson Kraybill, Ph.D., Director of London Mennonite Centre

Conflict, Communication, Conciliation *(June 20-28)*
John Paul Lederach, Ph.D.; Eastern Mennonite University; Director of the International Conciliation Service, Mennonite Central Committee

Celebrating the Christian Year
Marlene Kropf, M.Div.; AMBS
Mary Oyer, D.Mus.A.; AMBS
June Alliman Yoder, D.Min.; AMBS

Christian Life in a Post-Modern World
Harry Huebner, Ph.D.,Canadian Mennonite Bible College

Creation and Spiritual Renewal
Perry Yoder, Ph.D., AMBS
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Perry Yoder, Ph.D., AMBS

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How to be a missionary

I once thought I'd be an overseas missionary. As a boy I sat fascinated, listening to furloughed missionaries tell tales of faraway countries. More than once I resolved to be a missionary—well, at least a "returned" one.

Today, as Nancy Frey points out (page 1), most of us want to be anything but missionaries. That word has come to have too much negative baggage connected with it: colonialism, paternalism, Western "superiority." If God's call persists and we *must* obey, just don't call us a "missionary."

One couple whose life has spanned this change is Charles and Ruth Shenk, featured in the illustrations on several pages of this issue. The Shenks retired in 1995 after 37 years with Mennonite Board of Missions in Japan.

The Shenks' story does have some of the glamour once associated with missionaries: two-week boat trips between the U.S. and Japan, speaking in many churches while "home" on furlough. Here the Shenks were often discouraged by what they encountered. "But we also found people with hearts of gold in many congregations who wanted to do the right thing," Charles says.

That kind of attitude—the ability to see the positive in any situation—was what allowed the Shenks to bridge the gap between the old and the new in mission work. I learned that when I had the privilege of visiting them in Japan just shortly before they retired. What I saw were two people loved and respected by those they worked with. There was warmth and affection, a sense that these leaders and the people they led were on the road together.

When Charles and Ruth weren't around—and I didn't need an interpreter—I asked questions of the Japanese Mennonites about the Shenks' years as missionaries. One pastor's eyes brightened. "Shenk-san [a term of respect in Japan] can speak Japanese very fluently," the pastor said. "That is a gift from God; we can speak with him very freely."

The same pastor commented with appreciation on the fact that the Shenks had stayed in Japan so many years. "They have had the same kind of experiences we have had," he said. "They understand and can talk with us."

Indeed, the Shenks' 37 years in Japan made them almost too much a part of the culture at times. As leaders they found themselves under pressure to help arrange, if not marriages, at least dating partners. "We tried to resist," says Ruth, "but still we were involved quite often."

"The Shenks are good peacemakers," another Japanese Mennonite leader told me. "In our meetings, we sometimes have intense feelings—even conflicts. Charles and Ruth always try to understand both sides. Then what they say helps us calm down."

The same leader said: "The Shenks have not only been helpers. They have also shown us the direction by how they lived."

It was not always easy. Once the Shenks returned from a furlough to discover the Japan Mennonite Church had decided they should live in a city far removed from where they had expected. "We had no particular sense we wanted to go there," Ruth says. "But that's what the church wanted, and we wanted to be where the church wanted us."

With that kind of spirit, the Shenks' retirement didn't come quickly or easily. Shortly before returning to the States, they spent a month visiting 17 of the 21 congregations they had been involved with. "At the very first stop we found out how difficult it is to say farewell," Charles says. "From then on we said, 'Until we see you again.' "

Today Ruth and Charles live in Columbus, Ohio, sort of midway between 10 grandchildren—a goal that kept them going when goodbyes became hard. Columbus also has a large Japanese population with whom they hope to relate.

Already Charles has stories. Once while sitting in a dentist's office, he overheard a Japanese having trouble communicating with the receptionist. "That was difficult, wasn't it?" he said to her in Japanese when she came to sit beside him. Her face brightened. Another contact, another chance to share the gospel.

"All God asks of us is that we humbly share out of what we have received—and that we sincerely listen to the faith and experiences of others," Brubaker-Zehr writes in this issue (see page 6). The lives of Charles and Ruth Shenk show us how that can be done.

For not only have they served as models for Japanese Mennonites about how Christians should live. They also model for us in North America how to be missionaries, wherever we are, as we go into the next century.—*jlp*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Singer Ken Medema at a joint youth-adult worship service at Wichita '95 this past summer: "Well-crafted poetry with provocative images in our songs instructs and delights us long after we leave a worship service."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Margaret Loewen Reimer:
Is four-part singing really Mennonite? 6

United States joins MCC in clearing bombies from Laos 9

Inventor tries to prevent environmental disasters 11

How can we keep from singing?

As a worshiping community, we pray in profound ways as we breath together and create sound. For this reason we need to sing more in our services.

by Marlene Kropf

During the past year I've asked many people—young and old—the question, "If you had to choose between preaching and singing in worship, which would be the last to go?" Everyone has given the same answer—singing.

Often people hesitate before answering. Then they reply, "This probably isn't what I should say, but the truth is that I would miss singing most." Few doubt the value of preaching; the proclamation of the Word has been essential for spiritual formation in our tradition. What people are saying, though, is that something so important happens when they sing that they can't imagine worship without it.

The preaching-or-singing question is part of a research project I've been working at with Ken Nafziger from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. We have conducted nearly 100 in-depth interviews with Mennonites across the United States and Canada. Our basic question has been, "What happens when you sing? What happens between you and God? Within the congregation? What have been the consequences of singing?"

We have heard many wonderful and holy sto-

It matters not so much what people sing as that they sing. People experience God in much the same way whether they sing German chorales or Scripture choruses.

Singing unites generations and cultures. Kien Bilay, Philadelphia, Pa., points the way through a song for her nephew Hing Cheund and her daughter Jessica Bilay (left to right) during a worship service at Mennonite General Assembly held in Philadelphia in 1993.

(continued from page 1)

ries and have been amazed at the depth of feeling and commitment attached to congregational singing. It comes as no surprise, then, that something so important as singing can also be controversial in congregations. Worship wars have split some congregations or led to separate services; in others they merely create headaches week in and week out for worship planners and leaders. Even the worship at our biennial general assemblies and youth conventions has been tarnished by conflicts about music.

Based on the research we have done, I offer several observations and suggest directions which may help us find ways to respond creatively to the current challenges of worship planning.

Singing is a privileged place for meeting God. As a worshiping community, we pray in profound ways as we breathe together and create sound. The implication of this is that we need to sing *more* in our worship. Whether a congregation worships for one hour or two, we would do well to devote a third of the time or more to singing. We ought not deny the Spirit this opportunity to move among us.

Another implication for worship is that it does not matter so much *what* people sing as *that* they sing. In our interviews, we found that people talked much the same way about their experience of God whether they sang German chorales or Scripture choruses in worship. The sheer physical act of singing opens a gateway to the divine.

Our songs permanently shape our theology. Many Scripture texts and biblical images of God are indelibly etched in our memories because we have sung them over and over. They return to guide us, comfort us, and convict us.

Thus we need to pay attention to the formative power of texts. While it is true that almost any kind of song can open the gateway to God in worship, not every song is equally edifying. If our music supports a childish view of God or is unfaithful to the whole of Scripture, it will be harmful in the long run.

Well-crafted poetry with provocative images and satisfying rhythms continues to instruct and delight us long after we leave a worship service. Poetry is a powerful ally in theological formation.

Singing adds color and emotion to our worship. In our religious tradition which banished nearly all the arts from worship, we have sometimes suffered from an overly didactic or rational approach to faith. God wants both the heart and mind to be engaged in worship.

We will help people in our congregations worship with their whole selves and experience the breadth and depth of God's love if we deliberately include a variety of songs in our worship. Limiting ourselves to one style is like eating oatmeal for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. One of the strengths of our current *Hymnal: A Worship Book* is the broad array of musical styles it offers us—sturdy American folk tunes, resonant Russian Orthodox chants, rhythmic Hispanic songs, heart-stirring African-American spirituals, lively gospel songs, and many more.

A weakness of mainline Mennonite worship seems to be our limited emotional range for expressing our devotion to God. In certain settings, a tendency to overemphasize the joy

and exuberance of the Christian life leaves little room for life's pain. We need to follow the pattern of the psalms and include confession and lament as well as quiet, reflective praise and jubilant thanksgiving.

Song is a treasure handed on to us from faithful Christians of the past. Because Christianity is a communal, historical faith, we always worship in the context of the church of the ages as well as the worldwide church of our day. If we deny the historical character of our faith and neglect our connection with the past, we do so at our own peril. At the same time, the Spirit continues to inspire a "new song." We would be equally amiss not to open ourselves to the ever-creating Spirit at work among us.

We do young people and new Christians—as well as old Christians—a great disservice if we fail to introduce them to the church's vast treasury of song. Nor do we have the right to decide for others what they are capable or not capable of singing. Over the centuries the church's music has proved remarkably durable and appealing. Each generation should be permitted its own opportunity to browse among the riches of our collective heritage.

Thomas Troeger, guest speaker at a 1995 music and worship leaders conference at Laurelville (Pa.) Mennonite Church Center, presented a helpful "map" for keeping in perspective our connection with the past and our openness to the present. He noted that there are always three historical levels operative in our worship: structural, conjunctural, and ephemeral.

At the structural center are those classic elements of worship which provide stability and coherence—the Lord's Prayer, our rituals of baptism and communion, and certain enduring hymns like "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" or "Holy, Holy, Holy." Without these traditional and meaningful experiences, our worship would not be complete.

The second circle, the conjunctural, represents those elements which have entered our tradition in more recent times. We have begun to appreciate them, but we don't know yet whether they will endure. A visual example would be the use of banners in Mennonite worship. In the church of my childhood, only a motto above the pulpit and a wooden attendance register graced the walls. Today's worship spaces are enlivened with bright and colorful banners that change with the seasons.

A musical example of the conjunctural would be the French chorus, "Praise, I Will Praise You, Lord." Many Mennonites have sung this song since it was introduced at the 1984 Mennonite World Conference. No one knows yet whether it will endure until we make another hymnal. But whether it does or not, it has made an important contribution to our current worship.

The outer circle, the ephemeral level, represents what is new and untested. It may include a new song which summer campers bring home and want the whole congregation to sing—or a new way of praying that the pastor learned at a seminary ministers week. What is important is that there be space in our worship for trying what is new and evaluating it. Our worship would be dull and stodgy indeed if we never experimented with anything new.

Troeger emphasizes that all three circles are essential for dynamic worship. When it comes to singing, the question is not whether something is old or new but whether it helps us worship God. Wise and sensitive song leaders will include some of the inspiring hymns of the past. They will also be open to what is fresh and new. And if we discover something new that helps us worship more fully, we will try it again until we discern whether or not it has

(continued on page 4)

Singing is a universal language of praise. Here a group of Tobas Christians worship God through song in a service in Argentina.

It would be a tragedy if, in our conflicts about music, we lost the gift of song. Singing is important communal prayer.

enough staying power to be worthy of residing at the conjunctural level. Such careful attention to our musical diet requires time and thought, but it is essential if music is to fulfill its purpose of enriching our life with God and each other.

Troeger's discerning approach to church music stands in contrast to the powerful music industry which wields a heavy influence on American church music. In some cases music is being promoted and sold as a throwaway commodity with little regard for theology or concern for the communal and formative value of singing. Churches need to exercise caution in this arena just as they would in purchasing Sunday school curriculum or other resources.

Our Mennonite musical heritage is far too precious to squander. It would be a great tragedy if our current conflicts were to cause us to lose the gift of song. Singing has been our most important form of communal prayer. A grace-filled dimension of worship, it has nourished and sustained us through good times and bad. It will be our joy and delight even in eternity.

Our music has united us as one body and inspired us to love and serve God in the world. Perhaps one of the most important investments we can make in the spirituality of the church is to pay attention to singing—making sure people continue to be trained to lead our music well and inviting congregations to sing in all the ways that honor God.

Marlene Kropf is minister of worship and spirituality for Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. She and her husband, Stanley, attend Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Several resources which may be helpful to pastors and worship and music leaders who want to explore these ideas further are these:

Trouble at the Table: Gathering the Tribes for Worship *by Carol Doran and Thomas Troeger (Abingdon Press, 1992).*

Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down *by Marva Dawn (Eerdmans, 1995).*

Lift Every Voice and Sing, *a video and study guide produced by Sisters and Brothers, Inc. (available from Mennonite Media Ministries, 800 999-3534).*

***"I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. . . . Kings shall see and stand up, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of the Lord, who is faithful."*—Isa. 49:6b, 7b**

Gospel Herald

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For Richer, for Poorer (Dec. 5). In comparing the game of Monopoly to the real world, is the author implying that:

1. The increase in the world's billionaires is at the expense of the world's poor?
2. Wealth is to be viewed as a static pie, so that when one takes a larger portion, others are left with a smaller portion?
3. Wealth is accumulated illegally or immorally?
4. It is dishonorable to be wealthy and honorable to be poor?
5. Wealth should be redistributed?
6. Free enterprise and capitalism should be eliminated and socialism adopted?
7. Wealthy people do not create jobs?
8. Others do not profit by the activity of wealth (ask our church colleges)?
9. Wealth is not dynamic and constantly being created?

The fourth paragraph of this article sounds like something straight out of the liberal, socialist, big-federal-government manifesto. One need not wonder about the writer's political preference.

Are these views representative of the majority of U.S. Mennonites?

Larry Esmonde
Lima, Ohio

Thank you for printing such excelent articles about Advent and Christmas. Thanksgiving flows from my heart to God for gifted writers who can stir our hearts, challenge us with new ideas, and help us focus in new ways on eternal truth.

Here are some of the thoughts that we should treasure and ponder in our hearts:

Susan Mark Landis (Dec. 12): "Only as I force myself to understand that the ways of God are not clean and convenient, that God acts through those unworthy and without piety, that God's announcements clutch our hearts with fear—only then can I begin to appreciate the reason Jesus had to be born a powerless baby."

Arthur Paul Boers (Dec. 12): "Jesus came to help us out of our tangled messes. . . . Paradoxically, our problems are not a sign that God has abandoned us. Rather they are a sign that God is faithful, trusts us, and is at work among us."

Shirley Kurtz (Dec. 19): "Is believing that God materially prospers the faithful so that we should ask for the things we want a dangerous delusion, or is it just a harmless minor heresy?"

Larry Augsburger (Dec. 19): "Christianity has been a blessing of charity and peacemaking. It has not yet overcome evil or purged evil from itself, but let that not obscure the fact that it has profoundly affected the world."

Carol L. Bollinger (Dec. 19): "What would happen if Jesus swept through our congregations today, driving out all who merely honor him with lips but whose hearts are far from obeying him?"

How I wish that we could really hear the messages of these prophets among us.

Roberta Showalter Kreider
Sellersville, Pa.

The Gift of Foot Washing (Dec. 19). My congregation and I observe this practice. However, I am concerned about it. We have long been taught that foot washing served to teach humility and service. If kneeling before our brothers or sisters twice a year to wash feet is the only manifestation of humility in our lives, we are missing something.

If we think that washing two pairs of feet each year—feet that do not need washing—fulfills our obligation to serve our brothers and sisters, I'm afraid we need some serious thinking and teaching in this regard.

Eber Martin
North Lima, Ohio

The Gift of Foot Washing (Dec. 19). I have been participating in this practice since 1939. Each time I receive a rich blessing.

Two incidents stand out in my mind. I grew up in an area with racial prejudice. So I asked the Lord to make it possible for me to wash feet with an African-American brother some time down the road. It was such a joy when it happened—to know that we are equal at the foot of the cross.

Another time I was not going to participate for medical reasons. A young brother asked me to wash feet with him, and when I told him my reasons for not, he suggested I could wash his feet. That brought tears to my eyes.

I thank God that the Mennonite Church continues this practice from John 11.

Lester R. Souder
Telford, Pa.

I have been hearing that there are current discussions among Mennonites about dropping the call to be a peace church. As a believer called to service in another denomination, I know my vote won't count. But I would like to voice a plea.

Don't do this. Remain firm in the call to peace through reconciliation. There seem to be so few voices crying and working toward nonviolence already.

I have found courage to remain committed to a life of practicing faith and forgiveness through Jesus by hearing about and remembering the courage of members of the Mennonite Church. And I count on you as a resource for my community seeking alternatives to violence and sustained anger.

If indeed there are those among you called to military service, let them celebrate their faith among like-minded believers in a different denomination. But let the Mennonite church continue to be a sanctuary for those of us called to nonviolent peace action.

Amy Vincent
Scotland, Conn.

Pontius' Puddle

Is four-part singing really

The story of Mennonite hymnody is one of many influences. Which of these prevailed depends upon history, location, and adaptability to societal changes.

by Margaret Loewen Reimer

I had always assumed that Mennonites of European origin shared musical traditions similar to those of North Americans, especially four-part singing. So the first thing that surprised me while living in the Netherlands last fall and attending the Dutch Mennonite church was the unison singing. The hymnbook gave only the melody line for each hymn. "Yes, we sing only unison," confirmed a church member later.

The second surprise was the hymnbook itself. About a third of the hymns were from the Calvinist Psalter of the Reformed Church. Psalm singing, I discovered, has been a central part of Dutch Mennonite (Doopsgezinde) worship since the 1600s. The current hymnal, dating from 1973, was compiled together with the Reformed and Lutheran churches.

Why these differences between churches on the two continents? A look at Anabaptist-Mennonite beginnings is helpful in explaining them. The first century of Mennonite life saw an outpouring of new hymns and hymnbooks. After this burst of creativity, most Mennonite groups adopted the hymns of the major denomination of the region—the state church.

Hymn singing seems to have been very important to early Anabaptists, despite some uncertainty about its role in worship. Conrad Grebel, for one, was opposed to any music in church, including singing.

Many Anabaptists wrote hymns. According to the *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* at least 130 Anabaptist hymn writers can be identified by name. Many were prisoners or martyrs, such as those who passed time in a Passau prison in Germany in 1535-37 by composing and singing hymns.

By the 1560s, Mennonites had already compiled five hymnals—three Dutch and two German. These included collections of martyr hymns—first by the Dutch in 1563, then by the German *Ausbund* in 1564—and spiritual songs.

All this original music-writing became rather controversial in the Netherlands. The Calvinists accused Mennonites of preferring "human" songs to biblical psalms inspired by the Holy Spirit, according to Louis Peter Grijp in *From Martyr to Muppy* (Amsterdam, 1994).

One way of meeting this criticism was to write songs based directly on Scripture—some early Dutch hymnals carefully note each biblical reference in the margin.

Mennonite hymn writers were writing only words, not music. Tunes for the new hymns were simply borrowed from the popular songs of the day, a common practice among other denominations as well. The name of the tune was noted at the beginning of the hymn—no hymnals printed music.

This resulted in some bizarre notations, such as "To the tune of 'I know a woman in love' " or "To the tune of 'Misers who avoid drinking companions have little comfort.' " Eventually Mennonites replaced the secular names with religious ones. As they continued to sing these tunes long after their origins were forgotten, some of these melodies became Mennonite melodies, in a sense.

Hymnbooks multiplied because of all this hymn writing. Almost every congregation had its own collection of favorite songs, and individuals compiled their own for use at home and in church.

One Dutch hymnal of 1607 contained songs by Soetjen Gerrits, who began writing when she was 13 and died at age 25. Many hymns reflected local interests and events; in fact, they were so personal that one editor suggested that hymns be published anonymously to avoid hard feelings—people might refuse to sing songs by someone they did not like.

Singing the hymns of a state church. A century later Mennonites were singing the hymns of the state church, according to the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. The Dutch introduced the psalms of the Reformed Church into their hymnals in the 1600s; Prussian and Russian Mennonites began singing the chorales of German Lutheranism, while Mennonites in the Palatinate adopted the hymns of the Reformed Church there.

In Switzerland and France, Mennonites used the *Ausbund* until the 19th century, but they also sang Reformed hymns. After the *Ausbund*, Swiss and French Mennonites did not publish another hymnal until 1955, when they pro-

Mennonite?

duced one jointly with other denominations in the region.

What happened to all the Mennonite hymns? The reasons for their loss include the loss of the martyr spirit, migrations, and the personal and often mediocre quality of the poetry.

By the mid-1700s, Mennonite settlers in Danzig and Prussia had completed the transition from Dutch to German. The first German Mennonite hymnal, published in Prussia in 1767, contained translations of popular Dutch hymns and 150 psalms that were dropped in later editions. This collection was the forerunner of the *Gesangbuch* printed in Russia in 1844 and carried to Canada in the 1870s migration. All of these hymnals provided texts only.

In North America, Mennonites of Swiss and South German background used various non-Mennonite German hymnals, while the most conservative groups stayed with the *Ausbund*. The switch to English in American churches brought with it an increasing use of standard American hymns and gospel songs.

The first English Mennonite hymnal was a *(continued on page 8)*

H. S. Bender on singing:

'A wholesome return toward the solider type of music'

Known primarily for defining the "Anabaptist Vision" and the radical distinctives of the Mennonite faith, Harold S. Bender also held a deep appreciation for the broader Christian tradition and a special fondness for the chorales of German Lutheranism. The *Mennonite Encyclopedia* has a wealth of information about church music, much of it written by the chief editor himself.

Bender laments the loss of the early Anabaptist hymns. He writes that by adopting state church hymnals, Mennonites "lost touch with their own hymnological tradition." He concedes, however, that the martyr hymns "were too narrative in character to be suitable for worship."

Not only does Bender document the denominational sources of Mennonite hymns, but he pronounces judgment on the choices made. For example, the interdenominational hymnal of 1955 used by Swiss and Alsatian Mennonites "is of good quality," he says, noting that most of the hymns come from the Reformed tradition.

His severest criticism is directed at his own Swiss tradition—the Mennonite Church in North America. The hymnals of this group "contain almost exclusively standard English and American hymns, supplemented by the American gospel songs of the late 19th . . . and early 20th centuries. Very few hymns have been contributed by Mennonite writers," observes Bender, writing in the early 1950s.

"Unfortunately very few of the standard German chorales have found their way into the English hymnals, in contrast to the hymnals of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Brethren Church, although good translations are available," he continues.

Bender's highest praise is reserved for the General Conference Mennonite Church hymnal of 1940. This hymnal is most successful in carrying on the German hymn tradition, "with 104 German hymn tunes, 58 of which are classified as chorales." He adds that the book also has an important section of psalms and a good selection of "the better gospel songs."

Bender quotes a study that calls this hymnal "the best hymnal that the General Conference Mennonites or any other Mennonite conference has published."

The Mennonite Brethren hymnal of 1953, in contrast, has primarily "hymns of the gospel song type" and only "34 German hymn tunes . . . among which are only 10 chorales."

Bender was obviously uncomfortable with gospel songs. Their widespread use "has influenced the piety and even theology of Mennonites toward a heightened emotional emphasis and more emphasis upon subjective religious experience," he says. Gospels songs have contributed to "a progressive detachment from the historic heritage and anchorage of Anabaptist-Mennonite background."

He noticed, however, "a wholesome return toward the solider type of music. . . . Conscious effort has been made in certain North American groups to maintain and improve the quality of congregational singing."

One can't help but wonder how he would evaluate Mennonite music-making in 1995.

—*Margaret Loewen Reimer*

Two students sing during a chapel service at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

(continued from page 7)

small book published in Harrisonburg, Va., in 1847 called *A Selection of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*. The General Conference Mennonite Church published its first English hymnal in 1894.

Four-part singing enters scene. Four-part singing is so central to most North American Mennonites it is hard to believe it only entered Mennonite worship in the late 1800s—and with considerable opposition.

Beginning in the early 1800s, a few educators and church leaders attempted to improve congregational singing. Transmitting unwritten melodies through the generations had reduced singing to ponderously slow repetition of corrupted tunes, and they felt it was urgent to recover the original melodies and rhythms as well as to train people in singing.

The introduction of organs into European Mennonite churches in the mid-1700s raised the need for written music as well. Mennonite music-making was also influenced by the revivalist movements, which introduced faster tunes and livelier rhythms.

In 1832, Jakob Ellenberger, a Mennonite pastor in the Palatinate, compiled a book of four-part harmonies to go with the hymnal. He also initiated choirs and community groups to train singers. When South German Mennonites published a new *Gesangbuch* in 1854, the tunes were printed in four-part harmony in an accompanying book.

The 1972 *Gesangbuch* of the German Mennonite conference is printed in four parts, but most churches sing in unison; in fact, the hymnbook is little used as churches have switched to choruses and contemporary songs.

In Russia in the mid-1800s, a teacher named Heinrich Franz was writing down hymnal music for use in schools and by community choirs. His *Choralbuch*, with ciphers or numbers instead of notes, was published in Germany in 1860 and was widely influential in Russia and Canada. Choirs introduced four-part singing to congregations and were gradually accepted as part of worship, particularly among Russian Mennonites.

In the United States, Mennonites of Swiss background began singing schools in the early 1800s. One of the books they used was the *Harmonia Sacra*, published originally with three-part harmonization in 1816 in German and later in English. The book was never used as a hymnal. The first Mennonite Church hymnal with notes, called *Hymns and Tunes for Public and Private Worship*, was published in Elkhart, Ind., in 1890.

Thus four-part singing became part of some Mennonite traditions, but not all. A Dutch Mennonite once told me emphatically that "four-part singing is not even Mennonite," because it encourages individualism and pride instead of unity. Old Order Mennonites and Amish would agree.

While Dutch Mennonites may have avoided "vocal pride," they make up for it in their proud organ tradition. From the 1760s on, pipe organs have played a leading role in Dutch and North German Mennonite worship.

Reed organs, and later pianos, began appearing in Mennonite churches in North America in the late 19th century. In Mennonite churches of Swiss and Palatinate origin, however, instruments were totally banned from churches and schools until the 1960s, partly from tradition, partly from the fear that congregational singing would suffer.

Recent decades in North America have seen a new outpouring of folk hymns, biblical songs, and hymns from other lands, along with a greater variety of instruments. The 1992 *Hymnal: A Worship Book* is unusual not only for the broad range of cultures from which it draws but also for the new hymns by Mennonites.

This may signal a new flowering of Mennonite hymnody. It also reflects a growing professionalism that is influencing church music beyond Mennonite borders.

Margaret Loewen Reimer is associate editor of the Mennonite Reporter. *Last year she spent a sabbatical in Europe with her husband and two sons, researching and writing about Mennonites there. This article is a Meetinghouse release.*

United States joins Mennonite Central Committee in campaign to clear unexploded bombies from Laos

Washington, D.C. (MCC)—In many places people think of four-part harmony, horse and buggies, or pacifism when they hear the word "Mennonite."

These days in Washington, D.C., and New York City, many people are likely to associate Mennonites with the "Laos bombie project."

Two or three years ago, most North Americans—except Vietnam War veterans—couldn't have found the country of Laos on a map. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is bringing visibility to the hidden aftermath of the "secret war" in Laos waged more than 25 years ago. The nine years of bombing cost the United States at least $10 billion. It will cost several million dollars per year to systematically clear large areas of land.

When MCC decided two years ago to launch a cluster bomblet clearance project, the agency knew it was necessary to attract the interest of many others—including the U.S. military who dropped the bombs.

Through various efforts of MCC, the U.S. has agreed to set up training schools in Laos that will focus on both bomb clearance and community safety awareness. The U.S. ambassador and embassy staff have agreed to make bomb clearance a top priority. The U.S. has also increased its level of funds for trauma care in Xieng Khouang Province, the bomb-infested northeastern province where MCC is working, to improve the medical care for people injured from the previously unexploded bombs.

In March 1995 U.S. Ambassador Victor Thomseth traveled to the MCC project site from Laos' capital, Vientiane, along with other diplomats to learn about the extent of the problem. Visitors were so astonished at the magnitude of the problem and impressed with the work being done that a United Nations trust fund was established to solicit funds from governments for bomb clearance work.

In August 1995 a U.S. military assessment team spent 10 days in Laos—including several days with the MCC project—to consider how the U.S. government could contribute to clearance.

Other donors include the Canadian International Development Agency and European and U.S. church organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, Christopher Reynolds Foundation, and Public Welfare Foundation.

Mines Advisory Group, MCC's project partner, has established a long-term presence in Laos. Its leader, Rae McGrath, has become an international spokesperson on the need for clearing aging cluster bombs in Laos and for international restrictions on the use of cluster bombs. MCC is joining with others such as the Quakers, Human Rights Watch, and disarmament groups to question the morality of using cluster bombs in any war and their legality under international law.

Cluster bombs are primarily "anti-personnel" in design and end up killing civilians, as in Laos, rather than military targets. MCC personnel have spoken at U.N. meetings over the summer in Geneva, Vienna, and Cambodia about the deadly legacy of cluster bombs in Laos and the need for funds to clear them and to prevent their use again in other wars.—*Byron Peachey*

Mennonites in group arrested for prayer vigil

Washington, D.C.—Three Mennonite Board of Missions Voluntary Service workers were among a group of religious leaders and community activists arrested for protesting inside the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol building last month.

The illegal prayer vigil was described as "a cross between a revival and a 1960s-style civil rights demonstration" by a reporter for National Public Radio. It was called to draw public attention to welfare reform measures proposed by the Republican majority in the House of Representatives that don't insure aid to the poor.

The Dec. 7 protest violated a law prohibiting public demonstrations inside a federal building. The gathering—which included evangelical Christian leaders Tony Campolo, Ron Sider, and Jim Wallis—attracted national media attention.

"The protest itself was nothing more than a religious gathering; we were on our knees praying while the security guards read our rights, arrested us individually, and led us out of the building," says Ismail Salim, one of the VS workers arrested. They were released and are required to write letters to the judge explaining their understanding of "the higher calling" that prompted their actions, according to Salim.

Volunteer Heather Wengerd is a case worker for persons on public assistance. "My conscience is affected by my daily conversations with clients, and it wouldn't let the actions of Congress go unnoticed," she says of her participation.

"My beliefs have helped me to see lots of the people who are struggling, who are trying to find work under the current system and cannot," says Matthew Sears, who worked in an urban ministries center last year. "Breaking the law was the most effective way for us to get the seriousness of our message across."

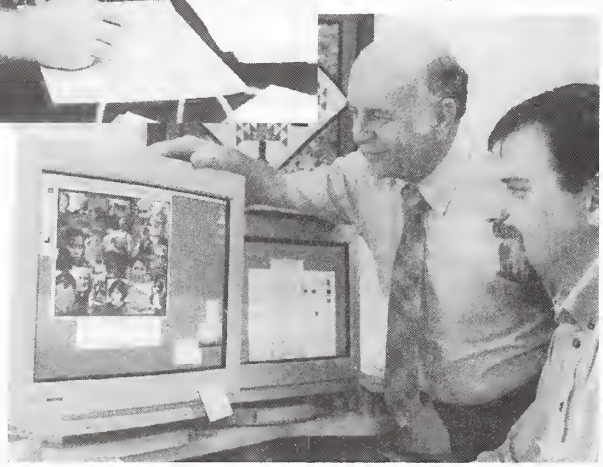
Sitting with the *Sacra*. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—Ann and Will Parkins page through the *Harmonia Sacra*, a songbook of church music popular with Mennonites and first published in 1892 by Ann's great-great-grandfather Joseph Funk. They are pictured here with a 165-year-old chair belonging to Funk that they recently donated to the Eastern Mennonite University historical library.

Weaver's career parallels Mennonite media work over 40 years

Harrisonburg, Va. (MBM)—Forty years is a long time, but they can fly by. Just ask Moses when you get the chance. Or ask Ken Weaver, who on Jan. 2 celebrated 40 years of media work for the Mennonite Church.

Weaver directs Media Ministries here, a program of the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) in Elkhart, Ind. His career parallels the rapid proliferation of media in the information age. Weaver had his fingers in everything from early radio broadcasts like "The Mennonite Hour" and award-winning television spots to interactive videos and Mennonite Church ads in major magazines.

The fact that the Mennonite Church moved into media so early (1951) can be traced to the passion for evangelism by a few entrepreneurial spirits. They decided to work within Mennonite Church institutions rather than become a para-church agency. This came at a time when some conferences forbade use of the media as a method of evangelism.



In photograph above, Ken Weaver writes entries in the ledger for the radio program "The Mennonite Hour" in 1956. Weaver's media work has changed significantly since then—in 1995 (picture at right), Weaver and Jerry L. Holsopple edit videos at Mennonite Board of Missions Media Ministries in Harrisonburg, Va.

"We deem it wrong to have the radio in our homes," the Virginia Conference of the Mennonite Church said in 1936, according to Hubert R. Pellman's history of Mennonite Church broadcasting. Radio users risked expulsion from the church, although this prohibition was never accepted by the larger part of the membership. Finally in 1944, the Virginia Conference discontinued making ownership of the radio a test of membership. They still urged a "strong protest against radio's evils" but in 1951 granted permission for members to use radio for evangelism.

The beginnings of what is today Mennonite Media Ministries can be traced to a 1951 radio broadcast by the Crusaders for Christ, which first aired in Harrisonburg, Va. In June 1953, MBM worked out an agreement with the Crusaders for a program named "The Mennonite Hour," to be the official radio arm of the Mennonite Church.

Expanding the broadcast. On Jan. 2, 1956, Weaver joined the administrative staff to help expand the broadcast and associated activities. Over the years Weaver worked as business manager, an instructor for Home Bible Studies courses, a promoter of "The Mennonite Hour" recordings, and executive director for the organization. Weaver now acts as associate vice-president for the new mission advocacy and communication division while vice-president James Krabill finishes responsibilities in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

In addition to "The Mennonite Hour," other well-known programs that came under Weaver's direction through the years include "Heart to Heart," "Your Time," "Art McPhee In Touch," "Choice," and programs in at least seven languages. The agency has produced programs and spots for CBS's Mystery Theater, the Faith & Values cable television network, and public service announcements. Cooperatively with other denominations, Media Ministries has produced programs featuring comedian Steve Allen and actress Helen Hayes.

In recent years, Media Ministries has focused more on providing outreach and mission education resources for Mennonite churches, including videos and curriculum materials, newspaper ads, brochures, and outreach cards.

—*Melodie Davis*

MCC helps rebuild Mennonite colony in Argentina

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is contributing $10,000 (U.S.) for windmill and other building reconstruction in a Mennonite colony near Guatrache, Argentina, some 500 miles southwest of Buenos Aires.

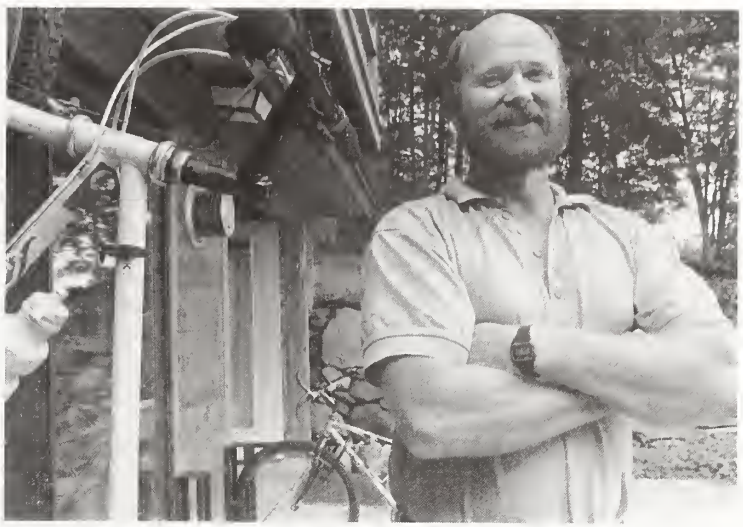
A 10-minute tornado, followed by hail and heavy rain, roared through the 1,300-member Remeco Colony on Dec. 20, destroying 12 homes, a school, some 40 windmills, 30 silos, 11 barns, four blacksmith shops and killing 90 percent of the colony's poultry. In addition, more than half the homes were heavily damaged. People escaped with only bruises and one broken bone, although 63 families were displaced and are living with relatives.

This disaster rides the coattails of a drought and an already poor harvest. Because of crop failure and ravaged food-storage silos, MCC may assist further with food supplies.

Some 100 Mennonite families from colonies in Mexico founded the Remeco Colony in 1986. The families had left for more abundant, productive land in Argentina. The Remeco Colony flourished in its first couple of years but hit hard times when inflation ballooned 80 percent in the late 1980s. The colonists survived these years only to be hit with this recent disaster.

Windmills are vital to the colonists for pumping water for livestock and other uses.

Colony Mennonites in Paraguay and other Latin American countries are investigating ways to assist the Remeco colonists through donations and loans.—*Emily Will*



Gerry Hawkes develops products like the compact bicycle rack called "Little Parker Wall-It" from his cabin home in the mountains of Vermont. The rack has been installed on Amtrak trains running from Washington, D.C., to Vermont.

'I've been racking my brain for years . . .'

Inventor develops products to protect environment

Woodstock, Vt.—Forester Gerry Hawkes lives and works in a log cabin overlooking 35 scenic miles of tree-covered mountains—land that his family has lived on for 200 years.

So when Hawkes invents products to help reduce air pollution and preserve the environment, he's not just working a nine-to-five job. He's trying to solve problems that could destroy his homeland.

Hawkes, a member of Bethany Mennonite Church in Bridgewater Corners, Vt., has invented numerous products designed to counteract dangers to the environment. One of his latest inventions—a compact bike rack called "Little Parker Wall-It"—was designed to help reduce automobile pollution. Hawkes hopes that the bike rack encourages people to ride bicycles more often by providing safe, attractive, and space-saving parking. It has been installed on Amtrak trains running between Washington, D.C., and Vermont.

Hawkes recently patented the EcoTrack system—a bicycle or walking path made from recycled plastic that does no ecological damage. The path is made from sections that snap together over the surface of the ground. Hawkes says the movable and resellable track requires no excavation or paving, "leaving the land virtually pristine."

A patent is pending on a spin-off from the EcoTrack path system called the EcoTrack tile. It is a recycled plastic tile designed to protect the surface of preservative-treated lumber steps, access ramps, and boardwalks. Deterioration of such wood could do major damage to the environment, says Hawkes.

"I've been racking my brain for years about how we can be good stewards in the world we live in today," says Hawkes. He has worked as an international forestry consultant and managed 30,000 acres of Vermont forestry over the last 25 years. Through his work, Hawkes became convinced that even the best forest management techniques could not reverse the destruction of air pollution.

Hawkes' career interest dates to his growing-up years on the farm. "That's where I learned how things run and how to make things work," he says.

Preventing disasters. Making things work may be a lot easier than convincing investors and consumers that such products are essential to preserving the environment, however. Hawkes says he often gets frustrated with what he calls the short-sighted attitude of financiers—"making as much money as fast as we can." He says that "long-range, sustainable, reasonable profit" should be the goal of environmentally responsible ventures and continues looking for investors and entrepreneurs who share his goals.

Hawkes says that he is "not one to go out proselytizing" about his faith but that it is definitely connected to his work. The greatest service of Christians concerned about the environment, he says, is to "prevent disaster rather than waiting until disasters hit."—*Valerie Weaver*

'Commandos' from the junior high Sunday school class at Manson (Iowa) Mennonite Church stormed a service recently and confiscated all the Bibles. The "attack" was part of a project of the congregation to raise funds for the translation of the Bible into the Thai Dom dialect of Laotian. The congregation raised enough money to send 130 copies of the gospels to Laos—one for each member of the congregation. A tally of the fundraising was kept on a four-foot Bible in the front of the sanctuary. Two translators from the Des Moines Mennonite Church, Ha and La Baccam, spoke to the congregation about their work on the project.

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"What can I say? That's what a pacifist does," said Wendy Lehman in response to a question from a lawyer about why she and other members of the Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) in the West Bank didn't retaliate when attacked by Israeli settlers recently. Lehman, of Kidron, Ohio, testified in the pretrial hearings of a settler who allegedly vandalized Palestinian shops and threw eggs and stones at the CPT members.

Lehman says the stickiest question to answer during the hearing was "Do you want to see the boy punished?" When asked to respond with a yes or no, Lehman said, "Trust me. In the context of my belief system, this is not an easy question to answer." She explained that she hoped the young man would be required to do something that made him aware of the affect of his actions rather than put in jail or fined.—*Christian Peacemaker Teams*

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Two of the four churches in Gulf States Mennonite Conference that minister to Native Americans now have Native pastors. Gary Tubby was ordained in the summer of 1995 at Choctaw Christian, and Lavaughn Lambert was installed as pastor at Poarch Community Church on Dec. 3, 1995. A new church, Native Christian Fellowship, is emerging among the Houma people under the leadership of tribal chair and evangelist Steve Cheramie.—*Elaine Maust*

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Blaine and Connie Detwiler wedged a 'For Sale' sign in the front lawn of their Susquehanna, Pa., home in 1992 and headed for Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va. Three years later, they're thankful that sign is still there.

This winter the Detwilers returned to that same empty house when Blaine accepted a pastoral position at Lakeview Mennonite Church, their home congregation. "Now that's God at work," Connie says with a smile.

Blaine completed his master of divinity degree in May 1995 and began his church responsibilities on Jan. 1.—*Katrina Wert*

Paints and dried flowers mean funds for refugees

Belgrade, Serbia (MCC)—Snipers and shelling kept Jasna inside her Sarajevo apartment most of every day for two years. To keep her sanity, she started experimenting with watercolor painting. Later she escaped Sarajevo and joined her two sons who had been sent to relatives here for safe-keeping when the war started in April 1992.

As happy as she was to be reunited with her children, now she had to worry about her husband, who has still not been able to get out. Jasna eventually found her way to Bread of Life, Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) partner agency here.

After listening to Jasna's story, Beba Varga, one of Bread of Life's codirectors, asked her if she did any kind of artwork. Jasna told about her attempts at painting in Sarajevo, and Beba immediately signed her up for Bread of Life's greeting card project.

Now, by decorating cards with her watercolor paintings, Jasna earns a full-time salary and doesn't worry about childcare because she works at home.

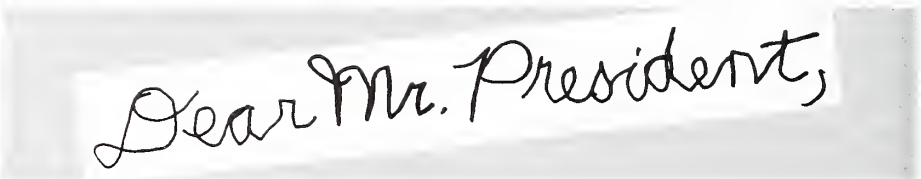
The greeting card project started with the persistence of another Bosnian refugee, Desa. She and her husband managed to get their oldest son out of the army at the war's start and fled from Mostar to Belgrade. "We went to the army base and asked the commander to let us talk with our son. The commander let him come out of the base and we were able to drive out of Bosnia just as the shooting started. It was a miracle that we got out, but we knew this war was wrong and we didn't want our boys to have to fight in it," Desa says.

From vacant lots to cards. Collecting wildflowers of her native area had been a hobby for Desa, so in Belgrade she started gathering flowers from vacant lots and drying them. From these she created pictures that she tried to sell.

In November 1993 she brought them to Bread of Life. A Chicago-based organization, Bright Hope International, gave money for the project and now markets the cards. The group has sold 1,000 cards and ordered 1,400 more. Besides Desa and Jasna, one other artist is earning almost a full-time salary, and six others are earning significant pocket money.

Cards can be ordered by calling 708 526-5566.—*Mark Jantzen*

Ten-year-old Tranca Farve lives in the St. Thomas community of New Orleans. St. Thomas was one of the earliest federal housing projects in the United States. Her mother, Demetria Farve, serves as the resident council's president. Tranca offered the following mini-essay to Mennonite Central Committee photographer Howard Zehr when he recently visited St. Thomas. "My plan for the future is for it to stop being black on black crime. It is too much of killing. Maybe if I dream of it, it will come true, and I will be happy. There are too many people dying. But I can't [just] dream . . . and this world will be a better place and the whites get along with the blacks. I want to be a better person, God."



Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Staff of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office suggest an unusual church or Sunday school activity—inviting children to write to the president.

"It can provide an opportunity to teach children the biblical example of speaking truth to power and to show children one way of participating in our democratic society," they suggest in an article in the Nov.-Dec. issue of the *Washington Memo.*

The Washington Office staff invited children from Mennonite churches in Indiana, Maryland, Arizona, and Mexico to write letters to the president (see below). They advise that letters be short and respectful, and suggest displaying children's and adults' letters in the church before sending them to the White House. They also recommend sending copies to congresspersons and local newspapers.

For more tips on writing to public officials, contact the MCC Washington Office at 202 544-6564. President Clinton's address is The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500.

—*Emily Will*

Dear President Clinton,

In Washington where I live I have felt sad to see all the homeless people walking around. But when I go to homeless shelters I feel better because they get food and clothes. So I think you should support people without homes or health care by raising peoples taxes about thirty dollars.

Then I think we will have a wonderful country.

Sincerely,
Jacob Shelly (8)

Dear Mr. PresiDent,

how is socks? are you going to vote for PresiDent next year? Or run?

Sincerely,
Susie Reed
P.S. write back.

Dear Bill,

I'm 8 years old. My Birthday is April the 5th. I think you should destroy all the guns in the world. Have you ever seen Queen Elizabeth.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Arriaga

Dear Mr. Clinton.

My name is Zachary. I am 6 years old.
Please make peace in the world
Stop dropping bombies
No more selling guns to other countries.
Zachary

Urban ministry praised by *The Buffalo News*

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—Mennonites in Buffalo, N.Y., may quietly go about their work of helping youngsters from single-parent homes with their homework and sponsoring a support group for their mothers.

But leave it to *The Buffalo News* to trumpet the "forgotten good works" a Mennonite congregation is doing in partnership with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) and the New York Mennonite Conference.

In the lead editorial in the Dec. 10 edition, the newspaper cited work by the Westside Church of the Living Word as an example of "good works of daily love and faith performed by volunteers from Buffalo congregations."

"After school, 40 to 60 youngsters frequently troop to the Westside Church of the Living Word, a Mennonite congregation, where volunteers help them with their homework," the newspaper said. "These youngsters are Hispanic, Native American, African-American, Anglo, and Asian. Nine out of ten, the Rev. Robert Tice says, come from single-parent homes."

Gifts of a working faith. "Who needs a miracle for the holidays? It's already here in this heartening human process that goes on day in, day out," the newspaper said. "The community must still be deeply grateful for these gifts of a working faith."

Tice, urban ministry director for Buffalo, is jointly supported by MBM and New York Conference. He brings together a multicultural network that is working to develop ministries in the new building that Westside Church of the Living Word now occupies.

"Our church, as a whole, is catching a much clearer vision about the city," says John H. Powell, MBM consultant for evangelism and church development. "Now, many Mennonites have relocated to cities, and there is an interest in . . . more partnerships with people."

Powell directs the pastoral and church ministries program at Houghton College's King Urban Life Center.

"A number of young folk, because of the Mennonite influence, have begun to take interest in what Anabaptism is all about—[people from] the Church of God in Christ, Baptists, Methodists," Powell says. "I see a real general interest developing."—*Tom Price*

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Teaching English in Albania. *Lushnje, Albania (EMM)*—Alex Akulli (above) and Timothy Gjini are the first Albanian Christians associated with the Mennonite Mission in Albania to attend a Bible college. Above, Akulli teaches English to young people in the village of Lushnje, where Eastern Mennonite Missions workers Glen and Martha Zimmerly serve. Akulli and Gjini hope to return each summer to assist the Zimmerlys in church planting.

- **CPT stages protest.** Six members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) dressed as angels and entered the Toys-R-Us store in Chicago on Jan. 1 to sing out against violent toys, computer games, and videos. Some 40 people gathered outside the store as a "celestial choir" and sang Christmas carols adapted for the occasion. This was CPT's fourth appeal to remove toys that promote violence.

- **Canada sales report totals.** Almost $1.2 million (Can.) was raised at 14 Mennonite Central Committee relief sales in Canada in 1995. The Central Fraser Valley, B.C., raised the most money—$269,031.

- **Pastors test radio spots.** Twenty one-minute radio spots and 11 five-minute programs of evangelistic outreach for Hispanic congregations are currently being tested with pastors and congregations. The programs were created by Jose Matamoros through Mennonite Board of Missions Media Ministries. The Hispanic Mennonite Convention in the U.S. and congregations in other countries will have access to them. More information about the spots is available from Matamoros at 800 999-3534.

- **Church pews for sale.** Twelve 14 ft. solid oak church pews are for sale by Bylerland Mennonite Church. Call 717 464-4395. Leave message if necessary.

- **New appointments:**

Ana C. Zorilla, director of Mennonite Central Committee Visitor Exchange Programs, Akron, Pa.

- **Coming events:**

Servant leadership for church renewal, Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, Pa., Feb. 13. Seminar focuses on biblical style of church leadership. Edgar Stoesz, retired associate executive secretary for Mennonite Central Committee, will lead a workshop. Sponsored by the Andrew Center. Register by Feb. 1 by calling 610 692-2785.

Conflict in the church seminar, sponsored by Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center, Feb. 17. Held at Trinity Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, Mich. Register by calling 708 627-5310.

Illinois Mennonite relief sale, Peoria Civic Center Exhibition Hall, March 8-9. Call 309 266-7704 or 217 376-3465 for more information.

"Dirk's Exodus," a full-length drama about Dutch Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems, Young Center, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, March 8-10 and 15-17. More information available from 717 361-1470.

- **New books:**

Rosanna of the Amish by Joseph Yoder tells the story of an Irish orphan reared by an Amish woman. This newly edited centennial edition appears 100 years after the death of Rosanna and includes a new foreword, maps, illustrations, bibliography, and author sketch. Available from Herald Press, 800 545-4703.

- **Job openings:**

Physician, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, Ind. Half-time position to provide medical expertise in development and administration of insurance products, help make underwriting decisions, and serve as spokesperson for MMA on medical matters. Must have current state medical license and three years experience in a specialty. More information available from Jerry Troyer, 800 348-7468.

NEW MEMBERS

Beech, Louisville, Ohio: Nicole Linder and Joe Schmucker.
Sharon, Plain City, Ohio: Lori Graber.
Sunrise, Clackamas, Ore.: Earl and Lois Balzer and Paul and Wilma Kirkpatrick.
Walsenburg, Colo.: Elizabeth Monnie and Dorothy C. Schmidt.

BIRTHS

Denlinger, Tamara S. Hunsberger and Duval L., Quakertown, Pa., Mariah Janae (third child), Dec. 21.
Gerber, Becky Kaufman and Ross, Milverton, Ont., Braden John (second child), Oct. 23.
Graber, Chelsea Davidhizar and Grant A., Stuarts Draft, Va., Joshua Ryan (first child), Dec. 16.
Horst, Cheri Kolb and Nevin, Spring City, Pa., Raegan Brielle (second child), Oct. 20.
Kachel, Lisa King and Craig, Ephrata, Pa., Allison King (first child), Oct. 19.
Lee, Jacalyn Shirk and David, Blackstone, Va., Roland Timothy (first child), Nov. 9.
Lehman, Sarah and Joel, Danville, Pa., Katherine Anne (first child), Dec. 10.
Leichty, Rebecca Plank and Kerry, Harrisonburg, Va., Elliott Dean (first child), Nov. 27.
Martin, Dorothy and Howard, Newton, Ont., (twins) Kevin Michael and Jocelyn Anne (third and fourth children), Oct. 17.
Mast, Jan Steffy and Dean, Lancaster, Pa., Sophia Maribelle (second child), Dec. 3.
Miller, Brenda Stoltzfus and Frank, Oxford, Iowa, Aaron Daniel (first child), Dec. 26.
Miller, Darlene Ruth and James, Spring City, Pa., Carley Noel (third child), Dec. 24.
Miller, Michelle Kelly and Alan, Waterloo, Wis., Madeline Joan (first child), Oct. 3.
Richardson, Candy and Mark, Danville, Pa., David Carl (third child), Dec. 4.
Saalfrank, Lisa R. Liechty and Michael J., Perkasie, Pa., Michael Jason (first child), Dec. 17.
Shenk, Nelly Moreno and Harold K., San Salvador, El Salvador, Sara Elizabeth (second child), Dec. 1.
Souders, Marla James and Scott, Plain City, Ohio, Melany Ann (second child), Oct. 11.
Steckly, Julie Seyler and James, Milverton, Ont., Emily Dianne (first child), Aug. 30.
Wilkins, Donna Peirce and H. Jeffrey, Blooming Glen, Pa., Eva Catherine (second child), Dec. 26.

MARRIAGES

Beyer-Unruh: Derek Beyer, Harrisonburg, Va. (Lindale), and Janna Unruh, Harrisonburg, Va. (Lindale), Dec. 16, by Loren Horst.

Brubacher-Lichty: Dwayne Brubacher, Palmerston, Ont. (Palmerston Missionary), and Heather Lichty, Millbank, Ont. (Riverdale), Sept. 9, by Roger Gast and Glenn Zehr.

Chalmers-Martin: Janet Chalmers, Elmira, Ont. (Presbyterian), and Kevin Martin, Elmira, Ont. (Floradale), Dec. 2, by Linda Bell.

Cuplin-Pfile: Kyle Cuplin, Freeport, Ill., and Joleen Pfile, Freeport, Ill. (Freeport), Oct. 21, by Dennis Buss.

Fisher-Stuckey: Matt Fisher, Eureka, Ill. (Metamora), and Amy Jo Stuckey, West Unity, Ohio (Lockport), June 24, by Randy Keeler.

Herrfort-Hutton: Darcy Herrfort, Listowel, Ont. (Riverdale), and Kim Hutton, Listowel, Ont. (Presbyterian), Aug. 19, by Vernon Tozer and Glenn Zehr.

Howling-Steckley: Heather Howling, Hanover, Ont. (Hanover Missionary), and Kevin Steckley, Chesley, Ont. (Riverdale), May 27, by Claren Martin.

Kauffman-Thomas: Leon Kauffman, Philadelphia, Pa. (West Philadelphia Fellowship), and Jenny Thomas, Johnstown, Pa. (Stahl), Dec. 30, by Mary Grace and Harold Shenk.

Moravec-Moyer: Kamila Moravec, Bethlehem, Pa., and Steven Moyer, Harleysville, Pa. (Plains), Dec. 8, by Richard J. Lichty.

DEATHS

Duell, Kristin, 16, Clackamas, Ore. Born: Oct. 23, 1979, Portland, Ore., to Gary and Kathy Duell. Died: Dec. 20, 1995, Portland, Ore., from an allergic reaction to anesthesia. Survivors—parents; brother: Jon; grandparents. Congregation attended: Sunrise Mennonite Church. Memorial service: Dec. 22, Mt. Scott Church of the Nazarene, by Teresa Moser McDermid. Cremated.

Eberly, Warren Rohrer, 75, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Feb. 21, 1920, Orrville, Ohio, to Amos and Ava Rohrer Eberly. Died: Dec. 17, 1995, Harrisonburg, Va., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Lelia Keller Eberly; sons: Willard, Sherman, Richard, Wendell, Charles, Brent; brothers and sister: Edwin, Mark, Mary Shank; 13 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 20, Dayton Mennonite Church, by Nate Yoder, Herman Reitz, and James Rhodes.

Good, Darrel E., 31, Columbiana, Ohio. Born: Feb. 14, 1964, Salem, Ohio, to Edwin and Mary VanPelt Good. Died: Dec. 16, 1995, Columbiana, Ohio, of a stroke. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Ron, Mike, Monica Kuhns, Melanie Genova; parents; grandmother: Ida VanPelt; grandparents: Mr. & Mrs. Merlin Good. Funeral and burial: Dec. 20, Midway Mennonite Church, by Larry Rohrer.

Hite, John William, newborn. Born: Nov. 25, 1995, West Liberty, Ohio, to Todd and Joann Horner Hite. Died: Nov. 25, 1995, West Liberty, Ohio. Survivors—parents; grandparents: Joe and Miriam Horner, Steve Hite and Shirlene Keith. Graveside service: Nov. 27, Mast-Hensler Cemetery, by Rex Kling.

Hostetler, Edna Pearl West, 79, Butteville, Ore. Born: Feb. 16, 1916, Elliot Prairie, Ore., to Harry and Anna Stauffer West. Died: Dec. 19, 1995, Butteville, Ore., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Leslie Hostetler; daughters: Evelyn Emmert, Dorothy Hansen, Carol Stringer; foster daughter: Mary Jane Lemke; brother and sister: Clarence West, Mary Hostetler; 9 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 23, Zion Mennonite Church, by John Garber, Steve Emmert, and Richard Regier.

Nitzsche, Bertha, 94, Hesston, Kan. Born: Aug. 11, 1901, Fulda, Minn., to Julius and Barbara Oswald Nitzsche. Died: Dec. 20, 1995, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Dan, Elmer, Lillian Erb, Clara Roth. Congregational membership: Hesston Mennonite Church. Funeral: Dec. 22, Schowalter Villa, by David Mann. Burial: East Lawn Cemetery.

Nolt, Esther G., Ephrata, Pa. Born: Lancaster County, Pa., to Moses G. and Sallie Musser Gehman. Died: Dec. 20, 1995. Survivors—husband: Elmer Nolt; children: Mervin, Rhoda E., Naomi M. Weaver, Grace L.; 4 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral and burial: Dec. 23, Bowmansville Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Leaman, Kenneth Witmer, and Chester Yoder.

Oswald, Irene Bernita Kuhns, 87, Shickley, Neb. Born: Dec. 29, 1907, Strang, Neb., to Joseph E. and Bessie Kerst Kuhns. Died: Dec. 18, 1995, Geneva, Neb. Survivors—children: Robert, Roland, Jon, Betty Gratopp, Bess Liversidge; brothers and sisters: Kenneth, Verlin, Waldean, and Raymond Kuhns, Helen Eichelberger, Lois Saltzman, Joan Troyer; 17 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Simon C. Oswald (husband). Funeral and burial: Dec. 22, Salem Mennonite Church, by Wilton Detweiler.

Roth, Stella Eicher, 87, Milford, Neb. Born: April 27, 1908, Beaver Crossing, Neb., to Leander and Elizabeth Yeackley Eicher. Died: Dec. 21, 1995, Seward, Neb., of cancer. Survivors—sons: Willard, Milton, Arnold, Merlin; sister: Doris Roth; 10 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Albert Roth (husband) and Burdette and Darold (sons). Funeral and burial: Dec. 26, East Fairview Mennonite Church, by Bill Saltzman and Lloyd Gingerich.

Shelly, Betty D. Rice, 71, Souderton, Pa. Born: Feb. 12, 1924, Plumstead Twp., Pa., to Harvey and Lizzie Derstine Rice. Died: Dec. 16, 1995, West Rockhill Twp., Pa., of cancer. Survivors—children: Randy L., Bradley D., Vicky A. Farmwald; brother and sisters: William, Mabel Brooke, Florence Derstine, Anna Mary Moyer, Elsie Meyers; 6 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Victor A. Shelly (husband) and a stillborn daughter. Funeral and burial: Dec. 23, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by David A. Stevens and Truman H. Brunk, Jr.

Steckly, Sarah Kipfer, 82, Milverton, Ont. Born: Dec. 23, 1912, Ellice Twp., Ont., to Solomon and Nancy Nafziger Kipfer. Died: Oct. 16, 1995, Stratford, Ont. Survivors—children: Stanley, Doreen Gerber, Isabel Mullet, Elsie Kuepfer, Nancy Pace, Norman, Marj Erb, Joanne Gerber, Ronald, Marilyn Clelland, Robert; sisters: Florence Boshart, Sylvia Schwartzentruber; 27 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Menno Steckly (husband). Funeral and burial: Oct. 19, Riverdale Mennonite Church, by Glenn Zehr.

Stoltzfus, Mary A. Yoder, 82, Lititz, Pa. Born: Dec. 26, 1912, Elverson, Pa., to Jacob Z. and Susie Beiler Yoder. Died: Nov. 23, 1995, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—husband: Aquila Stoltzfus; children: Irene Byers, Doris Sullivan, Ernest; stepdaughters: Susana Stoltzfus, Vera Keener; brothers and sister: Rebecca, Levi, and Paul R. Yoder, Sr., Naomi King; 11 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 27, Millwood Mennonite Church, by Michael Farmer and Nelson Martin.

Walkup, Norbert C., 87, Bradenton, Fla. Born: Sept. 25, 1908, Waldron, Mich. Died: Dec. 13, 1995, Bradenton, Fla., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Florence Sommers Walkup; children: Jim, Tom, Joanne Voshel, Cathy Frantz, Mary Halligas; stepsons: Randy, Arden, and Larry Sommers; brothers: Max, Paul; 21 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Helen Slawson Walkup (first wife). Memorial service: Dec. 29, Bay Shore Mennonite Church (Sarasota, Fla.), by Roy Bucher. Burial: Waldron, Mich.

Wenger, Esther Moyer, 81, Des Allemands, La. Born: Dec. 28, 1914, Hilltown, Pa., to Norman M. and Ida M. Detweiler Moyer. Died: Dec. 22, 1995, Raceland, La., of respiratory failure. Survivors—children: Mary Wenger Orlans, John C.; sisters: Ruth Koppenhaver, Rachel Myers, Miriam Birky, Betty Hershey; 4 grandchildren. Predeceased by: John E. Wenger (husband) and James Eldon Wenger (infant son). Funeral and burial: Dec. 26, Des Allemands Mennonite Church, by Robert O. Zehr and George Reno.

Yoder, Maxine Eash, 70, Goshen, Ind. Born: May 11, 1925, Middlebury, Ind., to Raymond E. and Sadie Mast Eash. Died: Dec. 18, 1995, Goshen, Ind., of respiratory failure. Survivors—children: Donovan, Darrell, Delores Zehr; brothers and sisters: Richard and Ralph Eash, Irene Lambright, Ruth Miller, Arlene Mast, Maurine Mishler, Alvera Clark; 6 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Freeman A. Yoder (husband) and Delores Zehr (daughter). Funeral: Dec. 20, Waterford Mennonite Church, by Lloyd L. Miller and Sylvia Shirk Charles. Burial: Forest Grove Cemetery.

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God helped us. This is what we did.

Almost lost in the bold directions our church took last year—a new confession of faith, a new vision statement, and the decision to merge with the General Conference Mennonite Church—was the fact that the Mennonite Church concluded 10 significant years.

These were the years of Vision 95, a plan for deliberate church growth based on four ambitious goals: (1) to begin 500 new "strong" congregations; (2) to increase membership by 50 percent; (3) to double the number of overseas workers; (4) to double our giving to the church.

Exactly what Mennonite General Assembly in Ames, Iowa, was thinking when it adopted these goals in 1985 can be disputed. "Admirable, but unrealistic—almost absurd," one pastor commented. In an editorial in this publication five months later, Daniel Hertzler wrote: "God help us. What have we done?"

Assessing what we did depends on who's interpreting the statistics. But it appears that we: (1) started 163 new churches; (2) had a net membership gain of 5 percent; (3) *decreased* our overseas workers by 214; (4) gave more, but we declined in the percentage of our income that we contribute.

No, we did not make the goals—none of them. But Vision 95 coordinators are quick to point out that the 10-year goals did change the church significantly.

For one, evangelism is a much more comfortable word for us. Once only the specialists talked about it. Today you can hear conversations about church planting in coffee hours between church and Sunday school.

Vision 95 also bought into the church language groups we didn't even know about before. Today in cities like Los Angeles and Philadelphia, Mennonites are worshiping in as many as 12 different languages on any Sunday.

And if nothing else, some 7,100 persons are part of our church, many of whom had no relationship with God until contacted by someone motivated by Vision 95.

We may not have understood all we were embarking on back in 1985. But one thing is certain: God used our "unrealistic—even absurd" efforts to spread the kingdom. As a result, we will never be the same.—*jlp*

God help us. What do we do now?

New people coming into the church bring with them new ideas for new ways of doing things. For the most part, organizations like the church can handle these in the early euphoric stages. Continuing to respond positively becomes more difficult with time.

Where the latter may be happening among us today has to do with what we sing and how we worship. According to Marlene Kropf (see page 1), the issues of music and worship styles have already split some congregations or led to separate services in others. Kropf goes so far as to call these "worship wars."

Obviously these differences are not just because of the new people among us with the efforts of Vision 95. A whole host of influences has affected us these past 10 years, not the least of which is what we hear and see on radio and TV. But as the range of people who make up our congregations diversifies, so will our tastes and our needs.

So far these "worship wars" have been mainly silent. I see it as a song leader when some people refuse to sing certain types of songs. Or there are the frowns when someone moves a little too much during an energetic number. And who hasn't heard snide remarks about "throw-up music" or "dead hymns"?

Of course, not all change is good. Nor are all songs equally edifying, be they out of the hymnbook or "off the wall." But we must be careful not to allow our preferences to escalate into sides that divide. If they do that, we can soon undo everything we have accomplished through Vision 95.

Jesus had his harshest words for those whose "right" positions made it impossible to accept new people. "Snakes," he called them. "Whitewashed tombs"—because "you lock people out of the kingdom" (Matt. 23:13-36).

Maybe we didn't reach the goals of Vision 95. But if we have learned a bit more tolerance, a bit more willingness to accept differences rather than allowing them to develop into "causes," we can count these among the successes of our 10-year goals.—*jlp*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Which way for Mennonite theology?

A crucial question is how Mennonite theology relates to other Christian theology. The way we answer will have major impact on whether Mennonites remain a peace church into the 21st century.

by J. Denny Weaver

Mennonites are quite new to systematic theology. Only in the early 1980s did developing a systematic theology for Mennonites become an accepted part of either churchly or scholarly agendas.

This discussion is much more than an irrelevant or intellectual exercise. Theology is the language we use to express our deepest commitments and aspirations. Theology is how we articulate our relationship as a people of faith under God and in relation to the world. The discussion of Mennonite theology brings up questions about the identity and future faithfulness of Mennonite churches. The outcome of the debate will have a major impact on whether or not Mennonites remain a peace church in the 21st century.

A crucial question in this debate concerns how Mennonite theology relates to other Christian theology. Until recently, it was assumed that Mennonites had nothing unique to say about the classic questions of theology: the nature of Christ (Christology), the work of Christ (atonement), and the nature of God and

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Alan Kauffman:
My congregation helped me decide God was talking to me 6

VS worker applications drop 12 percent in 1995 9

Making peace happen in Elkhart and Medellín 12

Theology is the language we use to express our deepest commitments and aspirations. It is how we articulate our relationships as a people of faith.

how God relates to Christ (the Trinity). It was assumed anything Mennonites said on such central issues would agree with the theology of evangelical or conservative Protestantism. As Harold S. Bender wrote in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* in 1937, "All the American Mennonite groups without exception stand upon a platform of conservative evangelicalism in theology, being thoroughly orthodox in the great fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith such as the unity of the Godhead, the true deity of Christ, the atonement by the shedding of blood, the plenary inspiration and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures as the word of God."

Today, 60 years later, some suggest that building on a classic core of doctrines shared with Western Christendom is a proper way to develop a theology for Mennonites. This approach emphasizes that Mennonites belong to a larger Christian tradition and that theology for Mennonites is shared with theology of other Christian traditions.

Advocates of this approach affirm that Mennonite theology is orthodox. It provides the wisdom of tradition in an area relatively new to Mennonites. It lines up with most 16th-century Anabaptists, who affirmed the classic creeds of Christendom. It counters exclusivist tendencies and any latent opinions Mennonites might still have about being the only or most true church. Finally, advocates of this approach say it is important to stress solidarity with other Christians at a time when Christianity is becoming a minority perspective in a world growing ever more secular and pluralistic.

One problem with this approach to doing theology is the way it treats the distinct elements of Mennonite faith. Visualizing the core doctrines affirmed by other Christians and the distinct elements of Mennonite faith in terms of two lists is a helpful device.

One list contains the *core of Christian doctrines shared by a number of other Christian traditions.* A short version of the list of core doctrines might be the ones noted by Harold Bender. Another version of the list of core doctrines starts with the classic creeds and formulas of Christendom—the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian formula, and the Trinitarian formula.

The second list contains the *distinct issues of Mennonite faith.* Older versions of the list emphasized "non's" and "not's"—nonresistance, nonconformity to the world, non-swearing of oaths, not suing at law, and so on. Harold Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" defined the distinct issues of Anabaptist faith in a well-known three-point outline:

1. Christianity as discipleship.
2. A distinct concept of the church that includes voluntary membership with adult baptism, rejection of the state church, separation of church from the world, suffering, the practice of "brotherhood," and love among members which includes sharing of possessions.
3. Nonresistance.

A recent version of this list might include Jesus as the norm for ethics, the church as a visible community that poses an alternative to the world's social order, and nonviolence and peace theology.

These lists contain different kinds of items: list one contains doctrines, while the second list deals with practices. Some suggest that the second list is secondary in importance to the first—that the list of Mennonite distinctives is somehow less true or essential than the list of core beliefs. After all, how can items affirmed by a small denomination that originated in the 16th century have as much truth and validity as items affirmed for nearly two millennia by many Christians?

In addition, the first list deals with doctrines related to salvation. Since the second list does not, some claim, its items cannot be as important and cannot even stand on its own, lest Mennonite theology be reduced to ethics. The items on the second list could be discarded in the name of ecumenism.

When the stress falls on ecumenical identity with the majority Christian tradition, the distinct Mennonite items become expendable—items perhaps significant for Mennonites but with no universal truth or validity. The first such item to be abandoned is most often the commitment to the rejection of violence—nonresistance, pacifism, and nonviolence.

On the other hand, if the Mennonite items are true—which would mean that items on the second list in some way belonged intrinsically to the gospel or to the story of Jesus—then the first list is clearly an incomplete one. And if it is an incomplete list, then Mennonites ought to challenge that incompleteness of this list rather than claim it as the foundation to affirm.

My suggestion for a theology for Mennonites is based on a different understanding of what I have here called the second list. The items on this list ought not be looked at as the reduction

When stress falls on ecumenical identity with the majority Christian tradition, the distinct Mennonite items become expendable. The first such item to be abandoned is most often the commitment to the rejection of violence—nonresistance, pacifism, and nonviolence.

of the gospel to Mennonite distinctives or a code of ethics. In fact, we ought not even think of this list as a set of beliefs or practices to be accepted in and of themselves. Instead, we should understand these items as regulative principles or as a perspective from which to examine all the issues of Christian theology. For example, discipleship is not an idea to be believed in and of itself. Discipleship is an assumption that one who accepts Jesus Christ will use Jesus' life and teachings as the norm within which to shape the Christian life.

While those assumptions seem obvious, they are not the assumptions of the majority Christian theological tradition. Although it is not usually stated in this way, the majority theological tradition assumes that Jesus is not the norm for ethics—at least not as Mennonites have understood Jesus and ethics. The assumption that Jesus is not the norm for ethics appears most specifically in the Western Christian tradition's attitude toward violence. The majority view of Western Christendom has been that one can reconcile state- and government-sanctioned violence with Christian faith. In contrast, the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition has historically rejected that accommodation to national violence.

As we search for a systematic theology for modern Mennonite churches, we need to recognize the different results that may emerge from these two sets of assumptions about Jesus. The key question is, "If we assume that Jesus is the norm for ethics, will the way we understand Christology and atonement differ from those who do not assume Jesus is the norm for ethics?"

Mennonite theologians who approach theology from the perspective of an ecumenical core (list one) with Mennonite distinctives (list two) in effect answer by saying that Christology and atonement will look the same whether or not one assumes that Jesus is the norm for ethics. In contrast, based on several studies of the last few years, I believe that assuming that Jesus is the norm for ethics makes a significant difference in the way we develop Christology, atonement, and other issues.

The classic formulas for Christology emerged in and after the fourth Christian century—that *(continued on page 4)*

Discipleship is not an idea to be believed in. It is an assumption that one who accepts Jesus will use his teachings as a norm to shape the Christian life.

is, after the church had accommodated to violence and abandoned the assumption that Jesus' life and teaching are the norm for ethics. The classic formula for the relationship of Jesus to God was articulated by the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325), today called the Nicene Creed. Depending on the translation, this creed says that Jesus is "one being," "one essence," or "one substance" with the Father. The formula of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) affirmed that Jesus is "fully" or "truly" God and "fully" or "truly" man. These statements are not wrong if one is asking the questions they answer. They are part of the first list of "fundamental doctrines" about which Bender writes.

However, these formulas provide nothing for discipleship. Jesus identified only as "man" and "God" cannot be a norm for ethics. The classic formulas allow one to confess Jesus without saying anything about ethics. Such formulas could emerge and be accepted as the foundation of Christology only after the church had reached its accommodation with violence in the fourth century. Each of the formulas allows one to affirm Jesus for salvation while accepting some other norm for the behavior of Christians —such as the emperor's need to defend his empire against a military threat. Affirming these formulas as the foundation of theology is to affirm a theological beginning point which assumes that Jesus is not the norm for ethics.

I am suggesting theological alternatives for Mennonites that are actually closer to the biblical materials than to the fourth and fifth century formulas. These alternatives are shaped by the assumption of discipleship—that Jesus is the norm for ethics. Rather than defining Jesus in the philosophical categories of Nicaea and Chalcedon, I suggest that we develop a narrative Christology. Narrative, telling the story of a person, provides the particularities of a person. It is that narrative—rather than a general designation of "God" and "man" —which enables Christians to follow Jesus. And it is that narrative, rather than fourth- and fifth-century formulas, which should be the foundation of a theology for Mennonites.

There are, then, two approaches to theology. One works with two lists, the other with two sets of presuppositions through which to examine theological issues. The choice between the two approaches is, I believe, a choice about the future identity of the Mennonite churches. The first will assist Mennonites in becoming just one more American denomination—part of the smorgasbord that characterizes American denominationalism. The second will underscore the continuation of Mennonites as a distinct witness for peace and justice in the world.

The discussion of theology is perhaps more important now than it has ever been in Mennonite history. We are rapidly losing our distinct ethnic identity. Even a short generation ago, Mennonites were still visibly identifiable by German language or plain dress. It is appropriate for those ethnic items to fade into museum display cases and the pages of photo albums. Salvation is not defined by dress, and God's linguistic skills extend beyond German; however, those ethnic markers did play a role in Mennonite theology. Even though Mennonites of Harold Bender's era had a theology of the two lists, the ethnic items provided a constant reminder that Mennonites belonged to a distinct tradition which emphasized discipleship and nonresistance and that discipleship went with Christology. In short, the ethnic items functioned as a kind of glue to hold the two lists together.

What happens now when the ethnic glue disappears? When Mennonites are culturally North American, what remains to remind Mennonites about discipleship, about Jesus as norm, and about the rejection of violence?

Theology is now more important for Menno-

(continued on page 8)

J. Denny Weaver has explored these ideas in his writings in several other sources. To study them further, see:

- *"Christology in Historical Perspective,"* in Jesus Christ and the Mission of the Church: Contemporary Anabaptist Perspectives, *Erland Waltner, ed. (Faith & Life, 1990), pp. 83-105.*
- *"Atonement for the NonConstantinian Church,"* Modern Theology *6.4 (July 1990), pp. 307-323.*
- *"Narrative Theology in an Anabaptist-Mennonite Context,"* Conrad Grebel Review *12.2 (Spring 1994), pp. 171-188.*
- *"Christus Victor, Ecclesiology, and Christology,"* Mennonite Quarterly Review *68.3 (July 1994), pp. 277-290.*

"For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.' "
—1 Cor. 18:11-19a, NRSV

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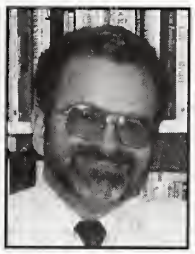

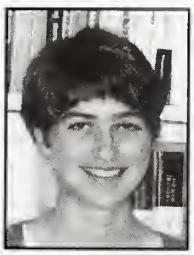

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READERS SAY

Coming to the end of another year—and the end of a year's reading of *Gospel Herald*—I realize how much our church paper means to me. Through *Gospel Herald* I participate in the life of the church. It helps me see who I am, what I can do, and where I can help.

In facing a new year, I am immensely encouraged and inspired by Ronald J. Sider's article, ***Loving People the Way Jesus Loved People*** (Nov. 21). He has outlined for me my New Year's resolution: Congregation by congregation and conference by conference—and even one by one—let's dare to put this vision of being the church into practice.

Lydia Samatar
South Orange, N.J.

For Richer, for Poorer (Dec. 5). We should be careful not to imply that the mere presence of wealth in our world is sin or evil. I don't believe that is what the Bible says. Some of God's best people were persons of wealth: Job, Abraham, Solomon. Are we to condemn these men for their wealth?

It is time to stop vilifying wealth and imputing guilt to people who have worked hard for what they have earned through God's good grace. Let us instead glorify God for these blessings.

It is our responsibility as Christians to care for the poor and the needy among us. In fact, God uses this as a basis of judgment to determine if we are really God's children (Matt. 25:34-40).

Nowhere in the Bible is this the responsibility of the government but rather of the individual and the church. Let us accept this responsibility and go forth and practice our Christianity in the world.

Herman Meyer
Kennett Square, Pa.

Toward a Mennonite World Alliance (Dec. 5). I strongly endorse the Council on Faith, Life, and Strategy's call to North American Mennonites that we move toward a global Mennonite alliance.

As a step toward making this vision a reality—and with an awareness of the unequal distribution of wealth among the world's regions—let's put the Mennonite boards (including MBM, MBE, and the Mennonite Publishing House) under the jurisdiction of Mennonite World Conference instead of Mennonite General Assembly. Membership on these boards could be proportionately distributed to accurately represent the diverse makeup of the global Mennonite church.

The reconstituted boards could designate where and how the church's resources would be used. For example, if the new MBE decided that, given the many institutions of higher learning in Canada and the U.S., we should close a couple of Mennonite colleges and use the money to fund schools in, say, Indonesia or Guatemala, then that's what would happen.

Our current structures say that the money of North American Mennonites belongs to us, and we can do with it what we want. Global structures should reflect our presumed belief that our common membership in the family of God is much more important than the national boundaries in which we happen to live.

John Zimmerman
Macon, Miss.

Larry Dunn's article, ***Deciding When to Stand Between and When to Stand Alongside*** (Jan. 7), and the news story on the following page about the security breach of the Eastern Mennonite University computer system (***Teenager Cracks Code of Campus Computer System***), invite some observations.

Dunn notes the significance of the work of Mennonite mediators both within and beyond the church. Some of these mediators are giving important time to developing an EMU graduate program in conflict analysis and resolution.

But it appears that EMU's administration initially turned to the criminal justice system of the Commonwealth of Virginia when they suffered this break-in. This could have been an opportunity to demonstrate their faith in their graduate program and to deal redemptively with the perpetrator, whether a professional hacker or, as it turned out, a minor in one of their own patron families. Instead, it is an example, as Dunn writes, of our Mennonite "comprehensive peace theology without an equally comprehensive approach to peacemaking."

Ruth S. Weaver
Ephrata, Pa.

How to grow new pastors:

My congregation helped me decide

Pastors do not come from trees. Nor are they found as surprises in the bottom of cereal boxes. They are seeded, nurtured, and developed in the local congregation.

by Alan Kauffman

I consider myself one of the statistical products of Ames '85. As the delegates of Mennonite General Assembly were busy creating ten-year, measurable harvest goals for the kingdom of God—which became known as Vision 95—I was busy working on a harvest of a different sort—building hay rakes and box manure spreaders at a plant in Belleville, Pa. At the time I was completely naive about what kind of transforming impact a decision in Ames, Iowa, could have in my life.

I had heard God's call before. In fact, I remember the exact spot in the congregation where I was sitting when the minister concluded a sermon with a call "for persons to consider giving their lives to pastoral ministry." I was 15 and an introvert. I heard God saying, "He is talking to you." My pulse accelerated, my guts rolled, and I began to sweat. Fortunately it was the middle of the summer, and everybody else appeared to be sweating too!

"Is this actually God's call?" I wondered. "So clear? So concise? So conflicting with what I want to do with my life?" Though I was not sure what else I might want to do, I had not bargained for this. So I tried to forget it, and I didn't mention this abrupt call to anybody. I told myself that it was just one of hundreds of things that teens think about becoming.

The years rolled on. I married my high school sweetheart, and we had two sons. I was accumulating seniority at my job. All along, I continued to secretly recognize the patient, persistent call of God in my life—a still small voice of reminder here, a nurturing nudge there, and "wet fleeces" that should have been dry and dry ones that should have been wet.

About six years after Nancy and I were married, I risked sharing my secret call from God with her. She did not laugh as Old Testament Sarai did; instead, she took what I shared with a touch of shock and a liberal measure of seriousness, and we prayed together.

Later I stuck my head out a bit further, telling one more person and then another. Those I told encouraged me to keep seeking, watching, waiting. I waited on God; God waited on me. There came a stalemate of a couple years, but this waiting started to bring some clarity for me. I began to realize that I had probably heard God's call correctly at age 15.

But 13 years had passed since then. I was now a husband, a father, and a dedicated employee. The prospects of four years of college and three years of seminary to prepare for pastoral ministry loomed like an impossible barrier to cross. It was a cross I did not honestly know if I wanted to bear. The waiting went on.

Then came Ames '85—and with it ten-year goals of the Mennonite Church. One of those goals was to establish 500 new congregations by the year 1995. Implicit in that goal was a need to find at least 500 new pastors, not to mention replacements for those retiring or resigning during that ten-year period. Like most denominations, the Mennonites did not have 500 pastors all prepped and ready to go. A sense of holy urgency followed Ames '85. Where would these 500 pastors come from?

As a Mennonite Church, we began to realize that pastors do not grow on trees. Neither are they found as surprises in the bottom of cereal boxes or purchased at MCC sales. For years we seemed oblivious to the *how* or *where* of finding a pastor. We just knew that when our church needed a pastor, one would happen along somehow, from somewhere.

Ames '85 may have been a wake-up call to the church. Pastors are seeded, nurtured, and developed in the soil of the local congregation. They are us! Pastors are developed from those fidgety children in the primary departments and those teens that crack their gum and knuckles all at the same time. Pastors are developed from those candid college students and the middle-aged managers of booming businesses. The pastors of tomorrow live among us today, in the community we call the church.

My home congregation of Maple Grove understood that and took the vision statement of Ames '85 seriously. In the fall of 1986, Maple Grove began a process of identifying persons within the congregation who had pastoral gifts. I was one of six they identified.

Suddenly the stalemate between God and myself had been broken. It seemed God's call on my life was now checkmate. Interestingly, in God's scheme of things, I turned out to be the

God was talking to me

winner! Some five years after Ames '85, in August of 1990—after much prayer, discernment, affirmation, and decision-making—I became a pastor after graduating from the pastoral ministry program at Hesston (Kan.) College. I am a pastor today primarily because one congregation took their responsibility of developing pastors seriously.

The Ames '85 chapter concludes where our new vision statement, *Vision: Healing and Hope*, begins. Part of this new vision simply reflects and builds upon the previous one. Nurturing congregational leaders is still one of the priorities of the Mennonite church in the years to come. Part of the work of local congregations will continue to be developing tomorrow's pastoral leadership today. But how can we intentionally seed, nurture, and develop those in our midst?

The following are four "nutrients" we can add to the soil of congregational life that will make it rich for the developing of tomorrow's pastors:

Prayer. In order for seedling pastors to blossom and bear fruit, we must pray. The phrase, "Prayer changes things," is true! Prayer changed me. It can change our church. Prayer is able to transform the hearts of those who hear God's call to ministry—from doubt and indecision to decisiveness and clear direction. Prayer also helps us see the specialness in people that God sees in them.

A "crisis" point in my own call came when someone asked me if I had ever given any thought to pastoral ministry—before I had even told my wife about God's call. I am convinced that this person had been praying. God's call is rarely found in a vacuum—it is seldom contained solely in an individual. Most times the call of God to an individual echoes in the hearts of other believers. The whole process of developing pastoral leadership must be soaked in prayer.

Shoulder-tapping. A second key nutrient is one-on-one encounters. Over the years, Mennonites have often maintained a strange alliance with a form of humility. Trying to keep our heads from swelling with pride, we have stuck them in the sand of humility. Some of us have grown up thinking we are flirting with the sin of pride if we publicly announce the gifts we believe God has given us. This appears to be especially true of the pastoral gifts. For those who find it difficult to state and affirm their own God-given giftedness, shoulder-tapping can empower individuals to do just that.

Shoulder-tapping is also critical because God's call is serious business for an individual to bear alone. Hearing God's call to pastoral ministry often includes career and life-altering implications. The person often needs "a second opinion" of counsel in the form of shoulder-tapping as added assurance that one is hearing the voice of God correctly.

Teamwork. For some, shoulder-tapping provides enough of a boost to get one's wobbly pastoral legs underneath them and moving in the direction of ministry. For others, however, a greater supportive effort is needed and must often be accompanied by teamwork in the congregation.

This should be an intentional, congregational effort aimed at supporting the person in basic and creative ways. Those who seem to possess the greatest sense of God's call while preparing for pastoral ministry have come from congregations that were intimately involved with them in their call. Helping to discern the call, saying, "We believe in you and what you are doing," and continuing to be supportive as the person is preparing for ministry are all ways congregations can be involved.

I'll never forget the Sunday morning that it was announced that I was planning to pursue pastoral ministry. The congregation was given the chance to respond verbally and symbolically. People shared meaningful words and then the entire congregation stood as a unified affirmation of my decision. My sense of call solidified. This was just part of the caring support my congregation provided along the way.

Whenever the local church rallies to support the potential pastors in its midst, the support

The author, Alan Kauffman, relaxes from pastoral responsibilities through bicycle riding. Here he prepares for a century (100-mile) ride he took last year. Through his efforts he raised $500 for his congregations building fund and for Habitat for Humanity.

My congregation helped me decide God was talking to me

(continued from page 7)

equals a sum greater than all its individual parts. Experiencing total congregational support sends the roots of one's call to a depth that ultimately can enable one to withstand the drought seasons of doubt that follow.

Modeling. Being healthy congregations and healthy pastors—and having healthy pastor and congregational relationships—are some of the most important ways we can encourage persons to answer God's call to ministry. Without modest levels of health, our most urgent efforts to call forth new pastors will likely fail.

Who would be eager to become a pastor when they see a pastor modeling for them a workaholic whose own family is neglected and wasting away? Who would be eager to become a pastor when congregations are allowed to use, abuse, and then discard pastoral leadership without ever having to work at their own dysfunctional patterns?

Working toward health is vital in calling forth new pastors. As pastors, we must freely and often express the joys and rewards that accompany this calling. We must model lives of wholeness. As congregations, we must be model employers in the way we treat our pastors. We can do this by recognizing the pastor's need for encouragement, giving the freedom to fail, and allowing the pastor adequate time for God, family, and self.

As pastors and congregations, we must work diligently at communicating with each other, commit to reconciling differences, and rejoice in the good happening in our midst. Modeling as pastors and congregations also includes terminating the relationship in positive ways so that both can celebrate and claim God's continued leading in their lives.

Prayer is able to transform the hearts of those who hear God's call to ministry—from one of doubt and indecision to decisiveness and clear direction.

Some might say that congregations with such rich, fertile soil do not exist. But my experience suggests that such land does exist for pastoral leadership to develop. I thank God often for the privilege I had to grow in a congregation where the pastor and congregation took seriously their responsibility to grow pastors. I now have the privilege of pastoring a congregation that has cared for me both as pastor and as person.

Alan Kauffman is pastor of Glade Mennonite Church in Accident, Md. He and his wife, Nancy, have two teenage sons, Nate and Matt.

Which way for Mennonite theology?

(continued from page 4)

nite faithfulness than it has ever been. If we have only the theology of the two lists, and affirm only a common theological foundation with Western Christendom, little remains to remind Mennonites of the importance of discipleship and the rejection of violence.

In fact, without the ethnic reminder, accepting the theology of the two lists really amounts to accepting the theology of Christendom, which does not see Jesus as the norm for ethics—although Western Christendom does not affirm that pacifists are heretics or that one *dare* not make Jesus the norm for ethics. Rather, Christendom has affirmed that one *need* not make Jesus normative. Now that Mennonite ethnicity no longer serves as a glue to hold the lists together, it is easy to discard the second list in the name of ecumenism or evangelism or any number of other reasons. Today Mennonite churches face the danger of becoming merely one more North American denomination that accommodates violence.

Discipleship, the rejection of violence, and the assumption of Jesus as the norm are the foundations from which to develop a theology that replaces ethnicity as the real identity of modern Mennonites. If rejection of violence, discipleship, and the normativity of Jesus are intrinsically part of the gospel about Jesus Christ, then those items will shape the core of our theology. It will be a theology that gives us a distinct identity and witness in the world as a peace church.

J. Denny Weaver is chair of the history and religion department at Bluffton (Ohio) College, where he teaches courses in theology and ethics.

Number of applications for Voluntary Service decreases 12 percent in 1995 for MBM

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—Applicants for the Mennonite Board of Missions' (MBM) Voluntary Service program dropped by 12 percent from 1994.

David Paulovich, MBM personnel counselor, says the drop in applications is puzzling since inquiry numbers are consistent with other years. Each year 500-800 people inquire about MBM's service options. Out of this group, about 100-200 people apply. From those applications, 50-100 people accept assignments in Voluntary Service (VS) or other short-term service.

"Some people read the job descriptions and decide to look for a less challenging task. Others prefer to find a more lucrative job. For others, this time in their lives isn't right for service," says Paulovich.

Chuck Neufeld, director of Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) for the General Conference Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., said MVS is experiencing a similar drop in applications for unknown reasons. He says that MVS plans to send a letter with an application to each pastor and ask them to encourage someone in their congregation to consider a service assignment.

Paulovich says that volunteers and alumni play an important role in recruitment. "The best recruitment tool is story-telling by past workers. The returning volunteer stimulates those people who are already mission-minded," he says.—*Vicki Hoyleman*

Fasting and praying in an Israeli jail: Peace team member in Hebron held for 48 hours

Hebron, West Bank (CPT)—A member of a Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) in Hebron, West Bank, was released unharmed on Jan. 10 after 48 hours of imprisonment.

Art Gish, an author and vegetable farmer from Athens, Ohio, was held at the Israeli civil administration in Hebron under charges of "doing damage to a gate under serious circumstances" and interfering with military personnel in carrying out their duties. Hisham Naji Al Batach, a Palestinian youth arrested with Gish, was released a few hours later.

'We laughed a lot together.' Israeli defense forces had arrested Hisham and Gish after they and others dismantled gates and turnstiles in Hebron's central marketplace. Originally installed by the Israeli occupation as security measures, Gish says the gates were a "constant frustration to the local people because they greatly hindered movement and symbolized the restrictions brought by the Israeli occupation." They were removed with the help of hundreds of Palestinian residents.

No outbreaks of violence occurred during the gate removal. The arrests appeared to be arbitrary sanctions against the actions of many, according to team members.

During his incarceration Gish refused food and water. His fasting concerned his captors, though Gish saw it primarily as prayer.

"The police didn't quite know what to do with me," says Gish. "I obviously wasn't a threat to anyone, but the military wanted to bring serious charges against me, seeking at least deportation."

He says his relationship with the police was congenial. "I told them my name was Samson and that I tore down those gates all by myself," says Gish. "They loved it. We did a lot of laughing together."

Gish also says that one of the first questions the police asked was whether he was Amish. "Many Israelis have seen the movie 'The Witness' and recognized my Amish-like beard. They said I was the first Amish terrorist they had ever arrested."

Against legal requirements, Israeli officials neither notified nor consulted the U.S. consulate following the detention of Gish. The Israeli authorities kept Gish in isolation during his incarceration. He was also warned not to return to the market area of the city following his release for risk of being harmed.

But after his release Gish returned to the market, where he was received with appreciation for his efforts on behalf of the local populace.

Gish has traveled widely as a speaker in Mennonite and Church of the Brethren circles. He has been in Hebron with CPT since Dec. 10, 1995, and worked in the Middle East for two years in the 1970s with Mennonite Central Committee.

CPT, a project of Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, and Quakers, has worked in Hebron since June 1995.

Embracing change. *Harrisonburg, Va.*—Melissa Gnagey, 9, displays the money she collected on one Sunday in her "spare change bucket" at Community Mennonite Church. Each week after the worship she makes her rounds, inviting people to empty change from their pockets in the container.

The idea originated with Del Snyder shortly after the church exchanged its Green Street facilities in 1989 for a building several blocks away. The "loose change" supplements regular mortgage payments at its larger present location. The effort raised $279.34 between August and November 1995 and more than $4,500 since its inception. Gnagey recently took over duties from Stephen Glanzer, 11, who handled the assignment for four years.—*Jim Bishop*

'Damascus Road' centers on institutional racism

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Transforming Anabaptist institutions to permit full participation of people of diverse races and ethnic backgrounds is the goal of The Damascus Road, a new project coordinated by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. It will bring together leaders and staff of nine Mennonite and Brethren in Christ organizations twice for seven days this spring.

The project grew from a call by a multi-ethnic group of Anabaptists who met in Chicago in March 1995. The group, dedicated to dismantling racism in the church, envisioned a training to address institutional racism.

Training for dismantling racism. The name comes from the radical transformation of attitude and belief that Saul experienced on the road to Damascus. His conversion made him a major force in allowing Gentiles full participation in the Christian community.

"The training process is designed to equip participants with the theological, educational, and organizational skills needed to begin the process of tearing down barriers in their own institutions," says Regina Shands Stoltzfus, co-coordinator of The Damascus Road.

"The Damascus Road process will involve the movement of God's Spirit, new sight, and institutional transformation," says Jody Miller Shearer, the event's other co-coordinator.

Enrollment full for spring. Crossroads, an interfaith ministry for racial justice based in Chicago, will conduct the Damascus Road training.

Participating organizations include Eastern Mennonite University, Fairhaven Mennonite Church of Ft. Wayne, Ind., offices of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Goshen (Ind.) College, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Mennonite Board of Missions, MCC U.S., MCC, and the Western District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

While this spring's enrollment in Damascus Road is full, Shands Stoltzfus says organizers hope to repeat the event for other institutions and congregations. For more information contact the Racism Awareness Project at MCC U.S., 717 859-3889.—*Emily Will*

Youth who participated in the Raleigh Mennonite Church peer mediation training included: (top row from left) Stacy Neal, Andi Hughes, Ian Belletti, Hannah Fields, and Nina Kolleh; (bottom row from left) Michael Brooks, Kara Bender, Dinesha Smith, Quincy Pickett, Tanishia Brantley, and Michael Roth.

Peer mediation training brings young people together to learn how to solve conflicts peacefully

Raleigh, N.C. (MCC)—"You're a chump if you back down from a fight," and "Things are different now," were some of the comments organizers heard recently at a peer mediation training for Jubilee Peace Center.

The peace center is a ministry of Raleigh Mennonite Church, which since Easter of 1994 is located a block away from Raleigh's largest public housing project.

Over Friday evening pizza suppers, youth from the church and the nearby housing project gathered for discussion, lessons, and role-playing about how to solve conflicts nonviolently.

For those growing up in public housing, the concept of nonviolence seemed unrealistic and unappealing. And although the youth who had grown up Mennonite had heard a lot about peace, they lacked the practical peacemaking skills taught in the peer mediation training. They also lacked awareness of some of the violent situations their counterparts in public housing face.

During the peer mediation graduation dinner, several participants presented a skit to show their families what they had learned. The youth received peer mediation certificates, prizes for entries in a poster contest, and praise for their accomplishments.

Regina Shands Stoltzfus, Mennonite Conciliation Service (MCS) staffperson who recently led the congregation in a diversity workshop, shared words of congratulations and encouragement. Families spoke of the importance of supporting their teenagers and helping them find positive alternatives to drugs and violence.

The peer mediation training and graduation dinner were funded through MCS's Urban Initiative on Violence. The peace center plans to continue encouraging the new peer mediators, to provide them opportunities to share their new skills, and to invite them to help lead next summer's peace camp.

The peer mediators will also have the opportunity to visit with youth from Richmond, Va., who are also involved in a similar program funded by MCS's Urban Initiative on Violence.

—*Steve Derthick, Dennis Boos, and Thomas Lehman*

Churches celebrate World Fellowship Day

Elkhart, Ind. (MWC)—Mennonite churches around the globe will celebrate World Fellowship Day on Jan. 28, marking the beginning of a "Menno year" that commemorates the contribution of Menno Simons to Anabaptism.

"WE DARE NOT BE BOUND BY ANY PERSON, POWER, WISDOM, OR TIMES, BUT WE MUST BE GOVERNED BY THE PLAINLY EXPRESSED COMMANDS OF CHRIST."

—MENNO SIMONS

World Fellowship Day, held every fourth Sunday in January, recalls the beginnings of the so-called "Radical Reformation" and the first Anabaptist baptism in Zurich, Switzerland. Georg Blaurock, Conrad Grebel, and Felix Manz baptized each other as adults on Jan. 25, 1525, in defiance of the state church's practice of infant baptism.

"There is value in a gathered sense of fellowship that congregations can enjoy," says Phyllis Pellman Good, member of the Mennonite World Conference executive committee, of World Fellowship Day.

This year is especially marked by Menno Simons' birth 500 years ago, at the end of January in 1496. Born in Witmarsum in the Netherlands, Simons was an ordained priest who became an Anabaptist in 1536 when he concluded that "infant baptism is not taught, and that the church in this, too, has strayed from the right path." He traveled among congregations preaching non-violence, successfully brought together Anabaptist groups in northern Europe, and is now considered one of the most influential leaders in the Anabaptist movement.

Menno Simons

Nearly a million people worldwide call Simons one of their spiritual forebears and are celebrating his birthday this year. Dutch Mennonites are planning a year of conferences, exhibitions, and celebrations.—*taken from material prepared by Dutch Mennonites*

Casa del Sol retirement facility moves forward

La Junta, Colo.—A task force is working on plans for an assisted living facility for Casa del Sol, a retirement community that began here in 1992. A study by a University of Southern Colorado verified the need for such a facility in that region, and a comprehensive site plan with residences and an activity center will soon be developed.

Manager Linda Welty says the project is in the early stages of fundraising. Purchasing land adjacent to the seven acres owned by Casa del Sol is possible.

Since the first residents moved into the complex in 1992, Casa del Sol ("House of the Sun") has continued to grow, along with its activities and plans. The first two complexes have housed a steady number of tenants, and a third building was completed this fall. Residents come from California, South Dakota, Missouri, and Colorado.

A nurse visits residents regularly to check blood pressures and answer health-related questions. Residents celebrate holidays and birthdays together and can attend a weekly Bible Study, regular exercise times, and a monthly hymn sing.

Casa del Sol functions under Colorado Mennonite Retirement Center Corporation.—*Clara Headrick*

German chancellor Helmut Kohl thanked Mennonites for their role in post-war Germany in a congratulatory note to Mennonite Central Committee on its 75th anniversary. "We Germans have much reason for gratitude that after overcoming the Nazi dictatorship, the hand of reconciliation was extended to us in such a clear way. Once more MCC was an example of what great positive energy can be released toward human co-existence when one reflects back on the love of God."

German Mennonites also sent a thank-you letter to MCC for its relief and development work after the war. In the letter, spokesperson Diether Lichdi wrote that the most important stimulus that MCC gave to Mennonites in post-war Germany was "reminding Mennonites in Germany of the peace witness that they had given up."

—*Die Brücke*

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See the movie, then meet the real person in *Beyond the News: Murder Close Up* from Mennonite Board of Missions.

Sister Helen Prejean, a guest in the MBM video, is played by Susan Sarandon in a major motion picture released nationwide on Jan. 19. "Dead Man Walking" tells the story of Prejean's ministry to a convicted killer as he awaits his execution. The movie, produced by Gramercy Pictures, is based on Prejean's 1993 autobiography of the same name. Prejean herself appears in the movie as an extra during a candlelight vigil.

Prejean, a nun in New Orleans, became a spiritual adviser to convicts on death row and families of victims. She is featured in one of a series of five videos about violence produced by MBM Media Ministries.

Jerry Holsopple, who produced the videos and saw a special screening of the movie on Jan. 10, called the film "gut-wrenching" and challenging.—*Melodie Davis*

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Four trees in the sanctuary by the end of August is the goal of Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio. Each tree represents a quarter of the "Year of the Bible," declared by the nurture commission of Ohio Mennonite Conference.

Along with individual pledges to read through the Bible across the conference, Zion plans to read through the New Testament together as a church. Each tree will contain symbols representing the particular portion of the New Testament that is read during that quarter.

The congregation launched the project in September 1995 with a parade of adults and children carrying scrolls and flags (made by the children) and dancing the *hora*, a Jewish dance.

Some people started the Bible-reading project in September, and others started with the calendar year.—*Ohio Evangel*

Chupp works for peace in Elkhart and Medellín

Elkhart, Ind.—Whether in northern Indiana or a South American ghetto, Mark Chupp works to prevent violence among youth.

Chupp traveled to Colombia for ten days in November and December, where he helped to train those working to establish peace.

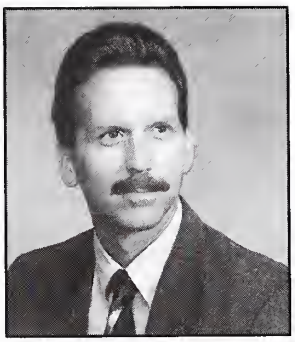
On the surface, Medellín, Colombia, is a beautiful city of two million people. A 25-mile subway system opened while Chupp was there, but 25 people were massacred soon before he arrived. Guns and kidnappings are commonplace.

Chupp is director of Violence Intervention Project (VIP) in Elkhart, Ind., and has been instrumental in efforts such as "Drop Your Guns," a gun buyback and community awareness program prompted by the death of a teenager.

He recently co-wrote a manual in Spanish with John Paul Lederach of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. The manual is being used to help train community facilitators of peace in Central and South America.

While in South America, Chupp conducted three workshops, including one in the city associated with the drug cartel. The mayor of the city is creating a citywide commission to fight violence, and Chupp met with the organizers. He stayed in the mayor's guest house, sometimes traveling with armed escorts. Chupp talked to the Colombians about gangs and his experience in Elkhart and the United States. Before leaving, he helped them plan an integrated approach involving all levels of private and public participation to fight the problems.

The violence in Medellín involves gun-toting gangs and political guerilla groups. Residents in rural areas are often displaced by the guerilla groups and move to the *barrios* on the outskirts of Medellín.



Mark Chupp, director of Violence Intervention Project, recently visited Colombia to conduct mediation training.

Peace accords signed with the government in past months have disarmed the militant political groups; however, there is a danger of gangs moving into the *barrios* as the militias lay down their weapons.

Drugs, guns, and kidnapping are big business in Colombia. "Kidnapping has become a source of good income for a lot of these armed groups," Chupp says, adding that agencies have formed to profit from handling ransom requests.

Empowering youth. On his last day there, Chupp met with the leader of a disarmed group in a *barrio*. Even without the guns, the groups work in the community and have political clout. "They're paying them to be like street patrols—unarmed, civilian, street patrols," Chupp says of the government.

His work in Elkhart is similar to what he did in Colombia. VIP emphasizes reducing violence by working in the schools on prevention and intervention techniques.

"Our whole approach is to empower youth," says Chupp, by emphasizing positive opportunities, communication, and peacemaking skills and recognition for youth. He worked in Central America from 1988 to 1993, aiding regional peace efforts in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The manual that he and Lederach wrote, "Conflict and Violence: Let's Search for Alternatives," was sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and was based on understandings of Hispanic cultures. It was printed in 1995 by a publishing house in Guatemala. The U.S. Department of Justice has purchased copies of the manual for use with Haitian and Cuban refugees, according to Lederach. Orders have also come from Uruguay and Argentina.—*Marshall V. King*

John Paul Lederach and Ann Graber Hershberger of Eastern Mennonite University outline a proposal for the master of arts degree in conflict analysis and transformation during a trustees meeting. The program began a year and a half ago and sponsors trips like the one Mark Chupp made to Colombia.

University links peacemakers from around world

Harrisonburg, Va.—Trips by peacemakers to other countries, such as the one Mark Chupp took recently (see story above), will become more common due to a program of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU).

Chupp acts as a consultant for the EMU Institute for Conflict Studies and Peacebuilding, which began a year and a half ago.

Through this work he has been involved in JustaPaz, a Colombian peace group tied to the Mennonite Church. EMU also recently formalized ties with the Nairobi Peace Initiative. The university cooperates with these two sites to train and educate peacemakers, sharing students and teachers.

Twelve students are taking courses to earn master's degrees in conflict analysis and transformation in EMU's program. Director John Paul Lederach says they are trying to admit seven to ten students a year to the program. The institute is currently reviewing applications from people in Latin America, Africa, Europe, and Asia.

"The need for thinking creatively in working through conflict is ever increasing," says Lederach, adding that people have begun looking for new models for bringing about peace especially since the end of the Cold War.

Chupp's trip was funded in part by grants from the McKnight and Hewlett Foundations, which are each giving $70,000 over three years to the three centers.—*Marshall V. King*

- **Students study off campus.** Chicago, Los Angeles, San Antonio, New York, and Washington, D.C., were among destinations for Hesston (Kan.) College students studying off campus during the January interterm. Through courses offered by Bethel (Kan.) College, Hesston students also traveled to London, Colorado, and Costa Rica. Subjects included drama, urban sociology, social work, literature, and tropical biology. Interterm classes end Jan. 26.

- **Forms available.** Forms for reporting information for the *Gospel Herald* births, marriages, and deaths sections are available from each congregation. Persons wanting to submit information should contact their pastor or church secretary to obtain a form.

- **New appointments:**

Ana C. Zorilla, director of Mennonite Central Committee Visitor Exchange Programs, Akron, Pa.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Freeman Miller was installed as bishop in the Lancaster Conference on Dec. 3 at Diamond Street Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

Randy Murray was licensed and installed as pastor at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio, on Dec. 17 by Bob Schloneger.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Andy and Susan Wade and two sons of Evergreen Mennonite Church will serve a four-year term in Hong Kong with Commission on Overseas Missions.

- **Coming events:**

Michiana MEDA meeting, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 1. Carol Suter will speak on "Christians in Business: What's Ahead in the 21st Century." Reservations available from 219 537-4334.

Congregational leadership training, Mackinaw City, Mich., Feb. 2-3. Looks at ways Anabaptist congregations can be primary alternative communities. More information available from the Amigo Centre, 616 651-2811.

Open House, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, Feb. 5. Includes information assembly, guided tours, department displays, and chance to meet faculty and register for 1996-97 year. More information available from 717 299-0436.

- **New books:**

Correction: The Herald Press phone number to order the centennial edition of *Rosanna of the Amish* (see Jan. 16 issue) is 800 245-7894.

- **Job openings:**

Director, Ben-El Child Development Center, West Liberty, Ohio. Services of the community mental health agency include day treatment, outpatient therapy, and case management. Qualifications include master's degree in administration, social work, or related field. Management experience preferred. Send résumé to James Burkett, Adriel School, Box 188, West Liberty, Ohio, 43357; phone 513 465-0010.

Director of maintenance, Tel Hai Camp and Retreat, Honey Brook, Pa. Responsibilities include general maintenance, repairs, grounds work, vehicle maintenance, and overseeing building projects. More information available from 610 273-3969.

English as a Second Language teacher, Goshen (Ind.) College. Part-time position begins August 1996. Responsibilities include directing and teaching in a new intensive ESL program for international students. Qualifications include master's degree in ESL or applied linguistics and ESL experience. Send résumé and three professional references to John Nyce, interim academic dean, Goshen, IN 46526-4795; phone 219 535-7503.

Marketing/business teaching position, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include teaching marketing and general business courses and providing leadership for the marketing concentration of the business major. Qualifications include master's degree (doctorate preferred) and experience in marketing. Send résumé and three professional references to John Nyce, interim academic dean, Goshen, IN 46526-4795; phone 219 535-7503.

Men's varsity basketball coach, Hesston (Kan.) College. Full-time position, beginning Aug. 26, combines half-time coaching duties with teaching in psychology or history with half-time admissions work. Send curriculum vitae and references to Paul Keim, academic dean, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062.

Offset press operator, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa. Full-time position requires working two weeks of day shift and two weeks of night shift. Send résumé to Human Resource Office, Mennonite Publishing House, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683.

Supported living counselor/coordinator, Philhaven Behavior Healthcare Services, Mt. Gretna, Pa. Responsibilities include assisting persons and families with the housing and independent living needs of chronically mentally ill clients, and providing care management services in cooperation with community agencies. Qualifications include degree in social work or nursing and two years experience working with the chronically mentally ill. Part-time position with possibility for increased hours. Send letter and résumé to Human Resources, Philhaven, P.O. Box 550, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064.

Cease-fire shows signs of strain. *Belfast, Northern Ireland (MBM-MCC)*—A mural on the side of a building here illustrates the current mood of the nation. The painting, featuring the triangular logo of the Protestant Action Force, includes a seal for the third battalion in North Belfast with the slogan "For God and Ulster." The 17-month cease-fire in Northern Ireland shows "serious signs of strain" according to Joe Campbell, a Mennonite-supported peacemaker in Belfast. As the new year began with the murder of the sixth drug dealer in as many weeks, it is unclear whether political impasses will mean a return to old violence, says Campbell. "This year we will either have the continuing benefits of peace or the return to the unthinkable violence of the past 25 years," he says. "We invite people to pray with and for us in what will be an important year for Northern Ireland."—*Tom Price*

NEW MEMBERS

Bethel, Wayland, Iowa: Irene Harder and Jaquelyn Reed.

Carpenter Park, Hollsopple, Pa.: David Waters, Mickey Bud Trout, Jason Miller, John Inscho, Jr., Jennifer Inscho, and Mark Blasko.

Central, Arehbold, Ohio: Deana Beck, Randy Leininger, Pam Leininger, and Nick Leininger.

Kalona, Iowa: Wilbur and Opal Miller, Irene Brenneman, and Bill Benham.

BIRTHS

Beck, Tracy and Sam, Wauseon, Ohio, Magan Elizabeth (first child), Dec. 26.

Perry, Melanie Kaufman and Ronald, Jr., Germany, Lance James (first child), Nov. 20.
Pierce, Charlene Bontrager and Mark, Indianapolis, Ind., Alexis Victoria (first child), Dec. 29.
Shouey, Glennys Heatwole and Robert J., Harrisonburg, Va., Rebecca Elizabeth (first child), Nov. 10.
Tyler, Stephanie Good and Michael, Fairfax, Va., Aundrea Grace (first child), June 25.

MARRIAGES

Frankenfield-Schrag: Meghan R. Frankenfield, Harleysville, Pa. (Blooming Glen), and Stephen J. Schrag, Minneapolis, Minn. (Faith), Dec. 30, by Myron Schrag and Truman H. Brunk.
Good-Marshall: Stephen Good, Harrisonburg, Va. (Harrisonburg), and Amy Marshall, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 9, by Wayne North.
Miller-Moser: Lise Miller, Kidron, Ohio (Sonnenberg), and Mark Moser, Kidron, Ohio (Salem), Dec. 2, by Dennis Kuhns, Marc Wolff, and Darrell Ediger.
Myers-Yoder: Tim Myers, Harlingen, Tex. (Deep Run East), and Heather Yoder, Harlingen, Tex. (Zion), Dec. 23, by Dee Swartz.
Ramirez-Short: Shawn Ramirez, Archbold, Ohio (East Bend), and Tara Short, Archbold, Ohio (Central), Dec. 16, by Wilmer Hartman and Lois Hartman.

DEATHS

Baer, Elizabeth Horst Kuhns, 82, Chambersburg, Pa. Born: Aug. 8, 1912, Chambersburg, Pa., to Joseph B. and Leah Horst Kuhns. Died: July 23, 1995, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—husband: Alvey Showalter Baer; children: Gladys M. Shank, Harold L., Marie L. Davis, Esther J. Mast, David E.; brother and sisters: Clarence Kuhns, Fannie Forry, Sarah Baer; 18 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, 2 stepgrandchildren. Funeral: July 27, Mount Zion Mennonite Church, by Roger I. Martin, Alvin Kanagy, Richard Oberholtzer, and Robert L. Martin.
Bechtel, Titus L., 79, Souderton, Pa. Born: Nov. 17, 1916, Lower Salford Twp., Pa., to Elias N. and Anna Landes Bechtel. Died: Dec. 23, 1995, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—wife: Grace Derstine Bechtel; children: Leon D., Shirley Ann; 2 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 29, Souderton Mennonite Church, by Gerald A. Clemmer and Wallace R. Jantz.
Beck, Edwin D., 69, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Aug. 24, 1926, Archbold, Ohio, to Solomon and Clara Roth Beck. Died: Dec. 29,1995, Toledo, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Valetta Nofziger Beck; children: Jay, Sam, Jane Waidelich, Sandra Beck; brother and sisters: Richard, Ilva Bontrager, Irene Meyer, Doris Short; 8 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jerry Beck (son). Funeral: Jan. 2, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman, Lois Hartman, and Dale Wyse. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.
Beisel, Jacob Clair, 85, Davidsville, Pa. Born: March 4, 1910, Cambria County, Pa., to George and Elsie McVicker Beisel. Died: Dec. 28, 1995, Davidsville, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—children: Leroy, June Horst, Ruth Hostetler; brothers and sister: Charles, Robert, Erma Weaver; 12 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Mildred P. Knavel Beisel (wife). Funeral: Dec. 31, Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, by Marvin Kaufman. Burial: Richland Cemetery.
Gerig, Doris Marie Graber, 72, Wayland, Iowa. Born: Oct.

A Pharisee drops by. *West Liberty, Ohio*—Oak Grove Mennonite Church welcomed Simeon ben Johanan this Advent season, played by pastor Larry Augsburger. He used incense and a menorah, wore a phylactery (small leather box with Scripture) on his forehead, and read passages from the Apocrypha to set the stage for his storytelling and sermons about the birth of Christ from a Pharisee's point of view.—*Willie Stoltzfus*

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1, 1923, Wayland, Iowa, to Peter J. and Sarah Rich Graber. Died: Dec. 15, 1995, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Survivors—husband: Milburn Gerig; children: Joan Redekopp, Jean Sickles, Sandra Glick, Faye Rudolphi, Beth Bachman, Pam Unruh; brothers and sisters: Dillon, Dennis, Dwight, Doreen Graber, Drusilla Rector, Dee Deck; 12 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 17, Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, by Roger Farmer and Ruben Chupp.

Landes, Abram N., 88, Souderton, Pa. Born: April 10, 1907, Souderton, Pa., to Abram G. and Ellen Nice Landes. Died: Dec. 28, 1995, Sellersville, Pa., of a stroke. Survivors—wife: Susie Clemens Landes; children: Grace C. Alderfer, Janet C. Vincent, Nancy C. Moyer, Abram C.; sister: Elizabeth Frantz; 16 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Alda (infant daughter). Funeral: Dec. 31, Souderton Mennonite Church, by Gerald A. Clemmer and Wallace R. Jantz. Burial: Franconia Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Mast, Anna Mary Sensenig, 83, Lititz, Pa. Born: Hinkletown, Pa., to Michael and Emma Landis Sensenig. Died: Dec. 17, 1995, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—children: Clair, Leroy, Michael, Ernest, Grace Stoltzfus, Verna Clemmer; brothers: Willis L. and Titus L. Sensenig; 28 grandchildren, 50 great-grandchildren, 3 step-great-grandchildren, one step-great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Raymond P. Mast (husband). Congregational membership: Oley Mennonite Church.

Serna, Margarita Z. Zepeda, 73, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Jan. 22, 1922, Mexico, to Vincente and Caetana Zepeda. Died: Dec. 18, 1995, Bryan, Ohio. Survivors—children: Francisco, Elida, Angela Campos, Mary Hoffsis, Margaret; 5 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Marciano Serna (husband). Congregational membership: Central Mennonite Church. Funeral: Dec. 20, Short Funeral Home, by Wilmer Hartman and Lois Hartman. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Shatzer, Weldon Kendall, 78, Baltimore, Md. Born: March 14, 1917, Greencastle, Pa., to Harvey and Anna Shatzer. Died: Dec. 23, 1995, Baltimore, Md., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—son: Richard Shatzer. Congregational membership: North Baltimore Mennonite Church. Funeral: Dec. 31, Jenkins and Sons Funeral Home, by Frank E. Nice. Burial: Cedar Hill Cemetery.

Short, Dale E., 74, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Nov. 5, 1921, Archbold, Ohio, to John and Martha Wyse Short. Died: Dec. 25, 1995, Archbold, Ohio, of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Evelyn Seiler Short; children: Marcia Wernet, Rodger, Gareth, Doug, Sandy Phillips; brother and sisters: Ivan, Louella Bender, Arlene, Zelma Seiler; 9 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28, Zion Mennonite Church, by Dee Swartz. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Swartzentruber, Esther Mughmaw, 70, Kokomo, Ind. Born: April 13, 1925, Miami County, Ind., to Russell and Iva Miller Mughmaw. Died: Dec. 23, 1995, Indianapolis, Ind. Survivors—husband: Carl Swartzentruber; children: Dean, Clarajean Sommers; brother and sisters: Merlin Mughmaw, Dorothy Owens, Ruby Burgan; 6 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 27, Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, by T. Lee Miller. Burial: Santa Fe Cemetery.

Weaver, Anna Mary, 80, Lititz, Pa. Born: April 8, 1915, East Earl Twp., Pa., to Amos W. and Anna Burkholder Weaver. Died: Dec. 24, 1995, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—foster daughter: Lois Burkhart; brother and sisters: Amos, Mabel, Alta, Emma Zeiset, Lillian Shaum. Funeral: Dec. 28, Denver Mennonite Church, by Isaac K. Sensenig, Harold B. Good, Edwin W. Martin, Luke G. Sensenig, and Ray Auker. Burial: Springville Mennonite Cemetery.

Yoder, Effie M. Kaufman, 77, Belleville, Pa. Born: Oct. 23, 1918, Hollsopple, Pa., to Harrison and Sadie Wingard Kaufman. Died: Dec. 28, 1995, Belleville, Pa., of cardiac arrest. Survivors—husband: Norman C. Yoder; children: J. Lester, Harold J., Rosa Johnson, Edith Yoder-Collins, Ethel Hartman, Ray L., Jenny, Carol Brammell, Lucille Coast; sisters: Twila Peachey, Mary Heckman; 9 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by Ivan Yoder, Elam Glick, and Erie Renno. Burial: Locust Grove Cemetery.

Obituary correction: Wilbur Wayne Leidig, Sr. (Dec. 26, 1995, *Gospel Herald*) date of death was Nov. 23, 1994.

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('Dear God, I make too much')

Few subjects raise the hackles, glaze the eyes, or shrink an audience as quickly as money. Is that why we hear so few good sermons about wealth these days? Or talk very little with each other about finances?

Bring up the subject of money in our congregations, and most of us steel ourselves against the message. We're sure what our "faithful" response is supposed to be: (1) more money for the local congregation; (2) more money for the area conference; (3) more money for churchwide institutions; (4) or, more likely, all the above. Somehow we've come to educate ourselves to thinking that talk about money is talk about giving.

We've also educated ourselves away from taking too seriously what Jesus had to say about wealth. About which he said quite a bit—more so than about almost any other subject. In some very direct ways.

Jesus usually didn't tell people in specific terms what they were supposed to do. But when a ruler asked him how to have eternal life, Jesus said: "Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor" (Luke 18:22).

As disconcerting as this directness is the fact that Jesus talked about wealth and eternal life in the same sentence—but as opposites. "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" he said after the ruler went away sad. "Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:24-25).

We who live in the consumer culture of North America find these words of Jesus difficult. We have developed long, complicated explanations of what he might have meant—explanations that seem to lengthen as our wealth increases. Yet whatever our interpretations of camels and needles, wealth and the kingdom, eventually we take refuge in the fact that Jesus also said, "What is impossible for mortals is possible for God" (Luke 18:26).

That these words of Jesus, uttered some two millennia ago, continue to astound and confuse shouldn't surprise us. Contemporary words about money do the same. In our December 5 issue, for example, in an article, "For Richer, for Poorer," J. Daryl Byler wrote: "This issue—the relationship of wealth and poverty—is one of the most important facing the church in North America today. In many ways, it is a test of the spiritual vitality among us."

"Finally, something has been written that challenges all of us to look at how we relate to the poor—without bashing the rich," one reader responded. But another said the article "sounded like something straight out of the liberal, socialist, big-federal-government manifesto." Two interpretations from the same words in the same language!

So what do we do with the tough words of Jesus about money?

1. We must continue to wrestle with them. Just because we do not understand them or know how to apply them doesn't mean we can ignore them. Too much is at stake. Our eternal destiny, for one thing. The fate of the poor in our communities, for another.

2. We must be honest about our values. Instinctively, most of us believe the "good life" is almost within our grasp. Each pay raise we get, for example, puts us just about at "enough"—if we had a couple of grand more. Or we know we're not "rich" because we can always find sisters and brothers better off than we.

Honesty demands that we admit—to ourselves and to each other—that we build much of our lives around getting and spending money. And that, for the most part, we enjoy it too!

3. We must learn to bring our wealth—and our attitudes about wealth—to God. True, God hears from us often about money. Not in audible prayers. But the desire for more is there. And God, who knows the desires of our hearts, hears those prayers too.

Perhaps it's time for God to hear new prayers. About how we long for more. About how we spend what we do have. Even about the amount we make. ("Dear God, I make too much" is a prayer I suspect God is still waiting to hear from a modern disciple.)

In his article this issue (see page 1), J. Denny Weaver argues that Mennonite theology is unique because we insist that Jesus' life and teachings are the norm for our ethics—for how we live as his followers. If this be the case, we must continue to wrestle with what Jesus says about wealth. No matter how difficult, how uncomfortable, or how predictable that struggle.—*jlp*

Mennonite Church School Day
February 4, 1996

January 30, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Genevieve L. Moyer, Doylestown, Pa., Eastern Mennonite University junior: "Students are indeed wanderers—sorting out vocational futures, striving for independence, occasionally squandering inheritances."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Jonathan Rich:
Finding out why I decided to attend a Mennonite college 6

Kyle D. Longacre:
Going home is the most difficult cross-cultural experience 8

Virginia stays 'in full fellowship' with churches that accept military personnel as members 9

Five years after the Gulf War: Something good out of Nazareth . . . 10

Redeeming the indeterminate prodigal:

Wanderer, come home; but first, wander

We are always, in some sense, leaving home. And by leaving, we are always making it possible to come home again.

by Keith Graber Miller

Nearly 17 years ago, with a remarkable surge of delayed adolescence, I quite independently decided to quit college after finishing my sophomore year. Believing—as all good sophomores would—that such a phenomenal decision would traumatize my parents, I decided to inform them of my plans by letter before returning home to talk with them face-to-face.

While the letter was intended to be both forthright *and* humorous, by the time it arrived on my parents' doorstep, it was the former but not the latter. Even the handwriting was harsh, curt, and nasty with sharp, slicing lines. In that five-page document, I listed systematically 14 reasons why I wasn't returning to school. The 11th of those reasons was identified simply as "the independence factor."

"You've been very, very generous with your money, and I thank you so much for that," I had written. "But with that aid comes (and perhaps rightly so) a sort of dominance. When I want to take vacations, I hear, 'You should be working. We're putting in a lot of money for your school.' Again, I appreciate very much your kindness, but I cannot stand the dominance. I realize that I'm not even 20 years old,

The church and its schools can partner together to provide the kind of wandering needed to help students find a relevant faith in a believing community.

but being the independent son of a gun that I sometimes am, I do not like being told what to do, when to do it, and why to do it. Friendly advice, yes. Dominance, no."

Nearly half a lifetime later, it is clear to me—and to my parents—that that crisis moment in our family's history, horrible though it was at the time, was the beginning for me of the healthy and lifelong process of "leaving home."

The biblical story we've come to know as "the parable of the prodigal son" tells us of another young person who left home, apparently with about as little graciousness as I did in the midst of my college years. The story is retold in "Ah, What Shame I Have to Bear," which appears as hymn 531 in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. The 19th-century Japanese text speaks about chilly winds, empty dreams, and tattered sleeves wet with dew.

Some years ago a middle-aged couple in the congregation I was pastoring told me about their 19-year-old daughter who had gone away to the Southwest in search of something which they saw as an empty dream. Several weeks later I asked them if they had heard from the prodigal daughter—and then quickly recovered and apologized for my insensitivity in making reference to the squanderer of the parable. "That's okay," the mother said, with tears in her eyes. "At least the prodigal came home."

Undoubtedly, one of the changes we as parents most fear is that process by which our children make their departures at various stages in life. Because we love our children, we fear both hanging on too tightly and letting go too soon. Likewise, we as children—which all of us are—fear leaving home.

This leaving home is not only an adolescent phenomenon but a decades-long journey marked by significant moments. They include speaking up to our parents for the first time; refusing to sing in the eighth-grade choir even though our mother believes it will affect our eternal destiny; writing less-than-tactful letters from college; not canning and freezing peaches, pears, green beans, applesauce, and other fruits and vegetables; buying a different model of car than the one our parents own; switching political parties; critically examining the faith of our youth; and moving to Wyoming. We are always, in some sense, leaving home. And by leaving we are always simultaneously making it possible to come home again.

Last March, in preparation for a "Church and College in Partnership" conference at Goshen (Ind.) College, I thought a good deal about these themes of leaving and wandering, of going away and coming home. At the conference a number of persons from Mennonite colleges across the country, together with pastors and other church leaders and those who work in Mennonite institutions, listened to each other and at times argued about how the church and college should be in partnership. The conversations were rich with potential, essential reminders of the overlapping and yet distinct missions of the church and college.

As a former pastor, new faculty member at Goshen College, and student throughout most of my life, I entered the conversations with some uncertainty in my own soul about whom I was representing at the conference or whom I most identified with: the church? the college? students? In the end, the confusing array of perspectives turned out to be helpful: I was able to view the conference and the issues it raised through multiple experiential lenses.

It is a similar indeterminacy which has made the story of the prodigal son such a moving one for many Christians throughout history—regardless of our age or place in the family, or of how much or how little shame we have borne, or of the extent of our foolish dreams. The Luke 15 story is deliciously gripping and timelessly provocative precisely because it allows us to enter into the souls—and soles—of its various characters, placing ourselves in the shoes of one figure and then another.

At some points in life we likely have seen ourselves as the prodigal—asking for our inheritance and then squandering it, yet yearning to come home. Other times we see ourselves as the gracious parent—lovingly embracing the wayward child. At other times, if we are honest, we see ourselves as the elder sibling—hurt by observing others quickly welcomed home, boasting about our faithfulness, and pained by the injustice of grace freely given.

At the conference last spring, we spoke with each other about the relationship of the church and the college—about faculty and students, learning and change, and academic integrity and faith. As we spoke I attempted to sort through who, in this partnership of education, is the prodigal—the one who has gone away and entered into dangerous wandering, far from the security and certainty of home.

If we believe the few studies which have been done on the impact of Mennonite higher education on church commitments of alumni, we may

suggest that the wanderers are *those who have chosen to go to other-than-Mennonite colleges* or who have chosen not to go to college at all. Studies of Mennonite college alumni have consistently shown that those persons remain in Mennonite congregations and enter into positions of Mennonite leadership in exceedingly greater numbers than those who go to other public or private institutions—or those who do not go to any college or university. At this point, far more Mennonites go to college than a half-century ago, yet only 15 percent of college-age Mennonites choose to go to one of the church schools. In this rendering of the tale, 85 percent of our young people would be prodigals.

Or we might suggest that *parents and congregations* are the real prodigals. Occasionally students at our church schools—in the midst of hearing about peace and justice, stewardship of resources, and loving dialogue—look back at their congregations with critical eyes. Sometimes students believe it is the church which is squandering its Anabaptist heritage, too freely imbibing popular American religiosity or a culture of greed and success. So we parents and congregations may be the prodigals. Perhaps it is the colleges and our children who are calling us back to our historic streams of faith, asking us to drink from the deep wells of our forebears, waiting to embrace us when we return.

Another image evoked at last spring's conference was that of *the colleges* as the prodigal wanderers who have left behind the church. Some say the colleges are the swineherds luring students away from their faith. Mennonites have nearly always had an ambivalent relationship with higher education. In his presentation at the conference, John D. Roth noted that the churches have often seen the colleges as both a treasure and a threat. Colleges have seen the churches both as pillars of support and as anchors which provide unwanted drag on academic progress. For the college professor, ambiguity, struggle, paradox, and irony are all important in the quest for authentic faith. For the church, faith shouldn't always be quite so open-ended.

Some years ago Goshen's president, J. Lawrence Burkholder, described the relationship between the Mennonite churches and Mennonite colleges as one of a couple living together without the benefit of marriage. If everything is going fine, there is no problem. But when we have tensions, we walk away from each other.

At times in our history, our living together has been more tense than at others. Some 70 years ago the church closed Goshen College for a year when church leaders believed the college was becoming too liberal and worldly. At other points in the college's history, it has experienced significant support from the larger church. But it is likely that the tension between the church and college—a healthy and creative one, as I've experienced it—will remain. Members of the college are accountable to two communities: the church and the secular academy. We are members of churches and members of academic societies within our particular disciplines. We read the periodicals which come from both communities and attend the gatherings of both.

But living with a foot in both the worlds of the church and the secular academy sometimes makes those of us who teach look as though we have squandered our inheritance of faith. On occasion the church stands patiently at the gate, looking into the horizon, waiting for the prodigal college to come home.

It may be most likely, however, that when we read the Lucan parable in the context of discussions about colleges and churches as partners, we think first of our *children at the Mennonite schools* as our prodigal ones. At a recent parents' event on Goshen's campus, author Susan Fisher Miller alluded to Jesus' story in reference to the historic mission of the college. "The inquiring young woman or man leaves home to find out where she or he belongs," Fisher Miller said. The college assignment, rather than to be swineherds, has been to serve as a protecting and safeguarding "surrogate parent" while at the same time to allure, transform, and compel through academics.

In many ways, this notion of the student as the

(continued on page 4)

Marcy Renollet, Newton, Kan., takes a quick look at her Hesston College diploma. She graduated with a nursing degree last spring.

(continued from page 3)

one searching, traveling, pursuing, and taking leave makes the most sense. Students are indeed wanderers—sorting out their vocational futures, striving for independence, occasionally squandering their inheritances, sometimes coping with immense crises, and often searching for meaning and faith. From my perspective on campus, it is both terrifying and glorious to observe such wandering and to participate intimately in the journey through what appears to be an overwhelming wilderness riddled with new questions and issues.

I am grateful, though, that such wandering can occur in a place where others care deeply about such journeys and about the church. Students on the campuses of our church schools seem to sincerely care about how their faith may speak to or be integrated with the existential crises they experience. I do not find myself worrying about students leaving behind their faith: I see them striving toward authentic, life-giving faith which makes sense of the chaos and the joy they encounter.

I also do not share hymn 531's pessimism about such wandering—the notions of chilly winds and pursuits of empty dreams. Not all wandering is squandering. From where I sit, those students taking their leaves from home and dealing with the swine which nibble at their feet appear to do so in constructive, not destructive ways. In a church college environment, the exploration leads not to "tattered sleeves wet with dew" nor inordinate amounts of shame but to a gaining of focus, a revitalization of life, and a new commitment of faith.

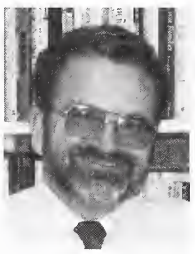
Our sacred texts tell us that our spiritual ancestor Abraham was a wandering Aramean. Although we often believe our biblical foreparents were unswervingly followers of Yahweh God, the Genesis stories make it clear that our spiritual forebear Jacob was still wrestling with his faith, choosing between several gods who reigned over particular territories. When

(continued on page 7)

Andrew L. Brunk of Weyers Cave, Va., wore the symbols of his major—camping, recreation, and outdoor ministries—when he received his diploma from EMU president Joe Lapp last spring.

***"Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great."*—Matt. 5:19, NRSV**

Gospel Herald



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We commend J. Daryl Byler for his article, ***For Richer, for Poorer*** (Dec. 5). He has captured well the biblical mandate to care for the poor as well as the necessity for we "rich" to live lives of integrity in our relationship to God and our money.

Where are the Christian pro-family, pro-life voices to counteract the prevailing attitude of our culture and government toward the poor and needy? Perhaps we are too comfortable with the widening gap between rich and poor because of our complicity with a society that favors the wealthy. May God help us to see that the problem in America is not poverty. It is rising affluence that often leads to indifference and alienation between groups of people.

Truly identifying with God's heart will change our attitudes toward the poor and the way we handle our wealth. May we be motivated to examine our attitudes and lifestyles, not by guilt, but by a sense of the righteousness and justice of God.

Ken & Charlene Schildt
Marietta, Pa.

Council on Faith, Life, and Strategy Issues Statement on Meaning of 'Dialogue' (Dec. 12). We were at Purdue '87 when the church's statement on homosexuality was adopted—under extreme pressure for time. We were under the impression that this was an interim statement with further work and discussions to take place. Now it seems as if that hasty, temporary decision is the church's final statement!

The six CFLS statements seem very aggressive. They seem to put the small minority of gays and lesbians and their parents who have gone public back into the closet. They seem to say we can have no part in the Mennonite church.

We parents are wondering how long we can continue to belong to a church that calls our children unacceptable for membership. Our prayer, as the parents of a gay son, is that there would be room for both.

Why is the church so fearful, threatened, and paranoid because some congregations have publicly stated that they welcome gays and lesbians into their fellowships? They *need* a safe place; where else can they go?

The CFLS statement says " 'loving dialogue' should not be construed to mean that the homosexual issue is unresolved or that the position of the church is in question." But as we see it, this issue *is* unresolved; the position of the church *is* in question.

The test of Christian fellowship is not whether we can be together when we all agree. It is whether our love for Christ and each other can hold us together when deep differences of belief would drive us apart. Let us not view each other as adversaries but as brothers and sisters for whom Christ died.

Paul & Martha Snyder
Breslau, Ont.

In ***The Difficult Art of Listening*** (Dec. 12), Bruce D. Martin sets out the proposition that it was Elijah's idea and doing to slaughter the 450 prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. This leads me to ask two questions:

1. Why do we continually fail to reconcile the love of God with the justice of God? Why do we find it hard to believe that a God powerful enough to create the world can destroy and tell others to destroy those who do not obey him?

2. Why are we asked to believe that the prophets of Baal—or persons of other religions that totally denounce the authority of God—are simply "sincere but misguided"? The fact remains that the only way to eternal life with God is to accept his gift, Jesus Christ. He was killed so that we could live.

We who profess to not only believe the Bible but also to live it must learn to accept its hard principles as well as those closer to our 20th-century ideals.

D. Robert Mitchell
Wellsville, N.Y.

For some weeks you have been running an advertisement from MMA directed to the use of retirement funds. Are MMA and *Gospel Herald* actually blind enough to believe that persons interested in responding to this ad reside only in North America? There must be thousands of Mennonite Church workers who do not have access to 800 numbers—the only way presented for making inquiries.

Please don't marginalize or be insensitive to us or others by making such a factor a cut off. We may not be the most wealthy members in the church, but we do care about how we invest money.

Jonathan Beachy
Asunción, Paraguay

Carpets were red, carpets are blue (Jan. 9). As they made observations on changes in Mennonite churches during their absence, I wonder whether Betty Hochstetler and Bill Derksen noticed how organs are becoming the visual centerpieces of our worship halls. In the past six months, I have attended services in two recently remodeled Mennonite meetinghouses, and in each the organ tended to overwhelm pulpit, communion table, cross, or any other truly Christian symbol.

In one the organ pipes were at eye level directly behind the pulpit; they offered a backdrop so visually complex and "busy" that trying to focus on the minister really was difficult. The other church used brass pipes in the center to give a gold effect. I confess, I had difficulty keeping the judgmental phrase "conspicuous consumption" from crossing my mind. And I wondered whether against such a backdrop any minister could summon the temerity to advocate a simple lifestyle.

Can we plan so that organs serve our worship rather than interfere?

Theron F. Schlabach
Akron, Pa.

I am concerned about what we Mennonites will call ourselves after the merger. I hope and pray that we are not drawn to an outlandish and impractical choice of a denominational name.

A new name should be musical and pleasant-sounding. For me the most musical church name in the Mennonite family is *The Kleine Gemeinde.* It is a soft-sounding title, one that is a comforting, gathering name meaning: "The Little Church."

An English name that sounds musical and has practical, good connotations is: The Mennonite Believers' Church.

One other suggestion: perhaps the grassroots should be allowed to vote by congregations on what the new denomination's name should be.

Wilmer D. Swope
Leetonia, Ohio

We welcome letters about our contents or about issues facing the Mennonite Church. Address: "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com

It took a skiing trip to Vail:

Finding out why I decided

by Jonathan Rich

The connection between faith and higher education can be difficult to articulate. Why did I choose to attend a Mennonite college—Goshen (Ind.) College, to be specific? Did my Mennonite faith have anything to do with it?

This relationship is hard for me to put into words because my faith is changing a lot right now. Living and growing up in a Mennonite home and community, it was easy for me to agree with and follow the beliefs presented to me by my parents and my church.

I now need to sort through those beliefs, and I ask myself often why I value the things that the Mennonite church values. Why do I agree with the church's emphasis on community? Can what sometimes seems an old, out-of-touch tradition really be the vehicle through which I want to work in the world? I must answer these questions for myself if I want to make the faith of my family and of the Mennonite church my own.

Some of the reasons I value Goshen College were made clearer to me over spring break last year, when, fed up with Goshen, three of my friends and I traveled to Colorado. The long winter months in Goshen, Ind., can be quite depressing, and the small, tight-knit community that initially attracted me to Goshen felt stifling. I no longer appreciated little details like having everyone on campus recognize me and knowing my professors on a first-name basis. In fact, these details began to annoy me—they brought with them an accountability that, to be honest, I was fed up with. So the aim of my friends and me on spring break was to get as far away from Goshen as possible; the only deterrent was a limited budget.

Two of EMU's 1995 graduates: Kim Martin (left) from Hagerstown, Md., and Julie Litwiller from Lancaster, Pa.

When my aunt and uncle in Denver offered us free lodging with them as well as use of their condominium in Vail, it seemed like a dream come true. What could be further from a mid-western Mennonite church college sitting on the flat farmland of Indiana than a posh ski resort town sitting at 8,000 feet in the middle of Colorado's Rocky Mountains?

We loaded the truck with clothing and enough groceries to keep food costs to a minimum and headed West. Giddy with the excitement of a week of freedom and the open road, we drove straight through to Denver and had a great time there and in Boulder for a few days.

However, when we got to Vail, we were all struck by how out of place we felt. It was like we were in a different world. We walked around Vail, surrounded by blond, buff skiers dressed in the latest ski gear and spending money like crazy. We watched in amazement. I couldn't relate at all to the value systems reflected in the lifestyles that I was encountering. I realize that nowhere in the world will my beliefs be in total agreement with all of the people I encounter, but this was different—I couldn't find anything that reflected the values that I believe in.

For example, on a bus ride back to the condo after spending a day in Vail, we overheard various conversations of people returning from their day on the slopes. Margaret, a sixty-something grandmother, chattered gaily about the day's skiing with her grandson and her cousin Gene. Both Margaret and Gene were decked out in fashionable ski outfits and their faces were bronzed to a leathery tan from countless days on the slopes. She kidded Gene about having bought yet another ski jacket, asking what he was going to do with his other 39.

At the front of the bus, a couple in their 30s from San Diego talked to a man spending his retirement in Vail giving ski instructions. The couple listened in awe; he had achieved what to them was obviously happiness in life.

Now I admit that in the eyes of my Mennonite forebears, I am living a very materialistic lifestyle. I don't want to come down hard on skiers, and I don't see the slopes as a gateway to hell. But listening to these conversations, I realized that my dislike for their lifestyle came not just from the expensive ski jackets.

My discomfort and dislike came from what I saw as their perspective on life. To them, and to most of the other people we saw, this was it—they had achieved the American dream. To me, it seemed lacking. I saw no concern for things like community, peacemaking, or simplicity—merely the selfish individualism that I dislike about American culture in general.

This experience shed new light on why I

to attend a Mennonite college

chose to attend a college like Goshen. I came because of a sense of common values and beliefs. I realized that the accountability I feel at Goshen College is a result of the beliefs I share with my fellow students and my professors. Because I value their beliefs, I also value their opinions of me.

I can't say that we had an awful time in Vail and packed up after the first day to return to flat, cold Goshen. It was great fun to leave my troubles and head West, but as much as I dreaded the seemingly overwhelming amount of work that awaited my return, the trip did provide for me a reaffirmation that Goshen is the right place for me now.

The keynote speaker at Goshen College's 1995 centennial conference, Ernest Boyer, spoke about five circumstances that have to be met in order for the church-college relationship to continue. In one of his points, he spoke about a phenomenon that he encountered at a Quaker college that he was involved with. He called it the "Quaker spirit" and argued that this type of spirit is essential.

I think that what attracted me to Goshen—and what I still value here—is the "Mennonite spirit" that I find on campus. This Mennonite spirit at Goshen is characterized by a concern for a continuation of the Mennonite cultural tradition, true. But it is also a concern for issues like peacemaking and community in the context of faith.

It is reflected in the conversation of the campus—conversation including speakers like Yolonda King and South African bishop Peter Story who keep a concern for peacemaking through faith a current issue at Goshen. And it is reflected in the everyday conversation among students, faculty, and administration.

It's kind of ironic that I had to leave Goshen in order to remember why I came here. In returning to this place, I regained an appreciation for what attracted me to Goshen originally and what I find attractive about the church-college relationship in general: the presence of a concerned, questioning community in the context of faith.

Jonathan Rich, Archbold, Ohio, is a second-year student at Goshen College majoring in English. This article is adapted from a presentation he made to a conference on church-college relations at Goshen last March.

Wanderer come home; but first, wander

(continued from page 4)

Jacob, who became Israel, left home, he also left Yahweh's territory. That meant moving beyond the comfortableness of the faith he had known. Our individual and corporate faith story is modeled after this larger story of Israel in which God's people move from bondage through the wilderness to the Promised Land, with all of that faith journey's fear, struggle, learning, and hope.

It is striking to recognize in the Lucan parable that the prodigal does in fact return home. He is not the same person as he was when he left. The story would have us believe that he is a *better* person. The leaving and the wandering were necessary to help him realize that independence is not the goal but only a stage on the way toward interdependence. It has made him recognize his own fallibility and mistakes and his need for God's loving embrace.

It is powerful to observe in the last several verses of the story the role of the elder brother who never left home. It is he, not the wandering prodigal, whose worldview has remained unchanged," who has taken for granted the "gracedness of home, and who has not recognized who he is. The wandering appears essential for entering into authentic, loving relationships once again.

My prayer is that we can partner together as colleges and churches to provide the kind of wandering needed for those who will be the church of the future—to help them find meaningful vocations, to discover relevant faith, and to assist them in wandering within the context of a believing community.

Wanderer, come home; but first, wander. And wander with the blessing of God.

Keith Graber Miller is associate professor of Bible, religion, and philosophy at Goshen (Ind.) College and a member of College Mennonite Church. He also serves as an editorial consultant for Gospel Herald. *This article is adapted from a sermon he gave March 26, 1995, at North Goshen Mennonite Church.*

It's time to stop the debilitating cycle:

Going home is the most difficult cross-cultural experience

by Kyle D. Longacre

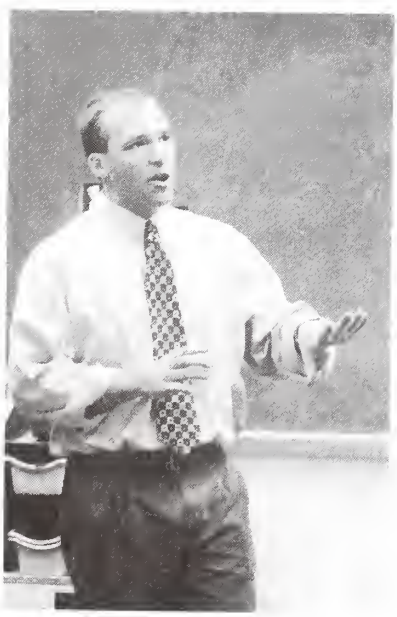
No matter how one arranges the figures, the number of Mennonite students at our Mennonite colleges is dropping. Many hope this a temporary dip that will soon be reversed.

And Mennonite colleges have always had letters in the mailbox from pastors and congregations expressing concern over the direction of the college; however, recently the mailboxes seem a little fuller. Should these facts be cause for increased concern?

A debilitating cycle exists in the current relationship between the Mennonite church and our colleges. This can be seen in the relationship of Mennonite college graduates returning to their home congregations—and, in turn, the will of the congregations to send their youth back to the Mennonite colleges.

An analysis of this cycle must begin by answering two questions. First, do graduates of Goshen College, Hesston College, and Eastern Mennonite University match the church's ideal of what a Mennonite college graduate should be? Second, is the church doing its job in actively encouraging its youth to pursue higher education based in the Mennonite tradition?

As a student at a Mennonite college, I heard many concerns over the decline in enrollment of Mennonite students. Some asked, "Why aren't more Mennonite students coming to the college we enjoy and believe in deeply?" Others pondered, "Why do Mennonite conferences and congregations voice concern to the college when we believe what we are doing here is healthy and positive?"



The author, Kyle D. Longacre, student teaching this past fall at Elkhart Memorial High School as part of his secondary education training at Goshen College.

Much of the congregational discontent about colleges results from frustrations the members have with Mennonite graduates returning home. These graduates are at first welcomed back into the fold; but as they engage themselves in the normal congregational discussions, these graduates are amazed to hear how close-minded and traditional their home congregations appear to be. They see the home congregations in which they grew up and the people they love believing and saying things which go directly against everything they learned at college. They respond to this amazement by blurting out their contemporary and relatively liberal views in a passion. These moments come out sounding like, "You close-minded, backward fools; where have you been the last 20 years?"

Our colleges have not trained students to deal with perhaps the hardest of cross-cultural experiences—returning to the home congregation. They have trained students to function and flourish in a multicultural world, but they have failed to train them in communicating their beliefs and learnings to their home congregations in a cooperative and patient manner.

But what of the Mennonite church's commitment to higher education? A church that wants to grow and flourish must continue to train its youth, regardless of academic major, in a vigorous study of the Bible, peace issues, and multiculturalism. Students should be encouraged to examine tough contemporary topics like women in ministry, abortion, and homosexuality.

Unfortunately, the current trend in many Mennonite congregations is a passive attitude about which colleges our most promising youth choose. Many Mennonite congregations provide limited or no monetary aid to students who wish to pursue a Mennonite education. Pastors, elders, and mentors of the congregations don't strongly encourage gifted high school students to pursue a distinct Mennonite education.

What does this say for the future of our Mennonite faith and identity? Do we not believe in having our leaders trained in peace, multi-culturalism, and the most current teachings of our best instructors and theologians?

Until the Mennonite colleges are able to train their students to function effectively within their home congregations, and until the Mennonite church's voice for Mennonite higher education is clearly heard, this debilitating cycle will continue. If it is left unattended, we will seriously jeopardize our commitment to maintaining and nourishing our Mennonite faith, and the numbers of Mennonite students at our colleges will continue to wane.

Kyle D. Longacre of Barto, Pa., graduated last year from Goshen (Ind.) College, with a degree in history and secondary education. This article first appeared in the Feb. 10, 1995, issue of the Goshen College Record.

Virginia takes stand on membership for military personnel but allows full membership for churches that disagree

Waynesboro, Va.—"Virginia Mennonite Conference does not endorse the actions of some congregations in extending the covenant of membership to persons currently serving in the military."

However, the conference "will remain in full fellowship with these congregations" and "continue in mutually respectful dialogue."

That was the action taken Jan. 20 by Virginia delegates in their semiannual business session at Springdale Mennonite Church.

In a special session three months previous at the same location, Virginia's delegates had tabled a motion that called congregations not to baptize or receive into membership "persons under military oath." Delegates did not take this motion off the table at the January session but instead let it die.

The new statement on membership and military personnel was drafted by the Faith and Life Commission (FLC), made up of the conference's bishops and overseers. It concludes that "loyalty to the military oath is incompatible with loyalty to one's covenant as a disciple of Jesus Christ."

Recognizing that some Virginia congregations already have members who are also in the military, the statement asks leaders in these congregations "to stay close to such members, assisting them in their Christian walk, encouraging them toward separation from the military, and finding ways to help them in their transition toward civilian life."

How, not why. Much of the discussion on the statement focused not on content but on procedure. FLC brought the statement to the session for affirmation, expecting it to go to districts and congregations for discussion before final adoption in July.

This seemed too slow for many delegates. Several voiced concern about how long the conference was taking to outline its position. Greg Mayo of the Cornerstone Church of Waynesboro said, "Military involvement is not at the heart of the gospel. For me to consume myself in making it so is wearing me out."

"Why do we continue processing and processing?" asked Gerald Martin, overseer of several Cornerstone congregations. "From the very beginning, we have made it clear that [peace] is not going to be an issue in our churches. We let people know where we stand, but we won't allow it to become an issue."

Leslie Francisco, pastor of the Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., whose congregation has more than 30 military personnel as members, said: "This document represents a middle of the road for us all. I have some concerns about it, but I'm endorsing it today because I believe the Lord would have us move on and not get sidetracked by some internal debate."

In the end the delegates agreed to "adopt" rather than "affirm" the statement. It will go to districts and congregations for discussion. If there is no substantial disagreement, the statement "stands as edited." If there is disagreement, "then we will start all over again," moderator Laban Peachey said.

Commitment against violence. FLC also brought a draft of a statement against violence to the session. Again delegates wanted faster action.

"We cannot wait with all the violence around us," said Glendon Blosser, bishop in Virginia's Central and Ohio districts. "Why not adopt the statement today and tell the world that we are against violence?"

That is what delegates did. The statement calls on conference members "to humble ourselves, praying and fasting that God would show us what behavior is violent and inconsistent as followers of Jesus in our homes, churches, and communities."—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Landis appointed minister of peace and justice as Peace Factory begins tour of North America

Elkhart, Ind.—Susan Mark Landis of Orrville, Ohio, was recently appointed minister of peace and justice for the Mennonite Church by the General Board.

Her responsibilities include encouraging congregations, conferences, and program boards to be peacemakers in their communities. She edits a quarterly newsletter, *Keep the Faith, Share the Peace,* that contains ideas for peacemaking. Landis is available to preach on peace topics, lead workshops and retreats on peace education and issues for conferences and congregations, and tell stories.

Susan Mark Landis

"This is an opportune time to be giving careful attention to the Mennonite peace witness," says Mennonite Church moderator Owen Burkholder. "Our own constituency needs to be reminded of our commitment to peace in times of peace and prosperity. Other faith traditions are looking to us for leadership in this area."

Landis initiated the Peace Factory that was displayed at Wichita '95 and that is now on tour throughout the United States and Canada. The interactive exhibit, built by 100 volunteers, tries to "connect the Bible with everyday life and offer that to our community," according to Landis.

The 40-foot by 60-foot series of displays fits into a 4,000 pound trailer. It begins the tour at Goshen (Ind.) College on Feb. 4-11 and will travel to the Olympic Games in Atlanta, various conference meetings, and other gatherings.

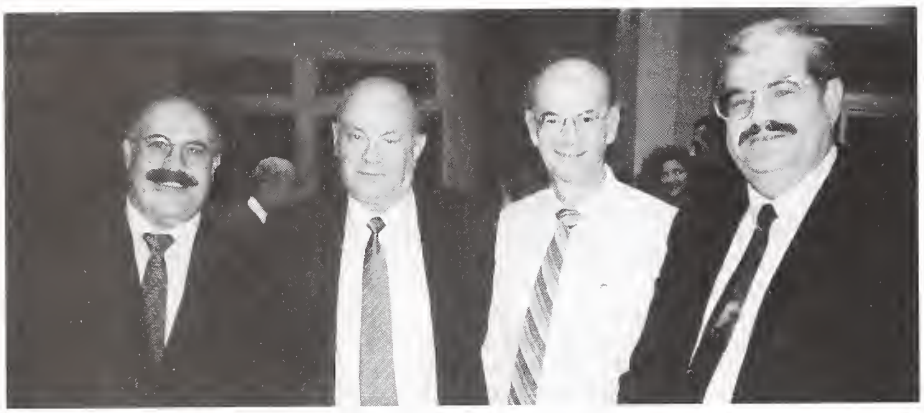
"The idea is that peace doesn't have to be boring; it can be exciting," says Landis. "Picking up a piece of paper may not affect people's lives much; this engages the senses."

The display includes children's activities like "How to Handle a Bully" and computer exercises, photos and stories of peacemakers, and a sculpture made from violent toys.

"I find it exciting to offer the Mennonite Church opportunities to keep their peace witness strong and act for justice in their personal, family, and congregational lives," says Landis. "Now is the time for Mennonites to offer an alternative to the violence surrounding us."

Landis can be contacted at 216 683-6844 or through e-mail at smlandis@aol.com.

—*taken from releases by Mennonite Church General Board and Goshen College*



Two weeks after the assassination of Yitzak Rabin, Muslims, Jews, and Christians gathered at the Nazareth hospital for the premiere of the video Brother Brother. *The Mennonite-produced video tells the true story of a Jewish soldier who had been brought to the hospital by an Arab taxi driver after a stabbing. Present for the showing were the soldier and taxi driver, along with (left to right): Nakhleh Bishara, medical director of the hospital; Menachem Ariav, mayor of Nazareth Illit (Upper); Robert Martin, former Nazareth hospital administrator; and Suhail Fahoum, deputy mayor of Nazareth.*

Finding peace partners five years after Gulf War

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—What good could possibly come from the Persian Gulf War?

Five years after the U.S.-led bombing of Baghdad began Jan. 17, 1991, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers Nancy and Robert Martin recall the sense of helplessness they felt during 40 Scud missile attacks.

But instead of war's spoils, the Martins witnessed the formation of a new partnership between Nazareth Hospital and Japan.

"In the last five years, there has been an ongoing partnership with the Japanese through a nongovernmental agency called Peace on Earth, who have sent volunteer personnel," Robert says.

This group of Catholic pacifists sent three volunteers to work at the Nazareth Hospital for six months in 1995.

During the war, Japan formed a Gulf evacuees emergency relief committee, which sought to evacuate expatriates living in the Gulf area to their home countries. When the group completed its work with funds to spare, they learned of a building project at Nazareth Hospital. The five-story building now houses a physiotherapy department, a renal dialysis unit, two in-patient clinical departments, and the only school of nursing for Arabs in Israel.

At war's end, as Robert received a contractor's bill for $97,800 for the work that was done during the war on the new building, the Japanese organization sent word it would give $100,000 for the building project.

The Martins also remember the support they received from the church during the Gulf War. Pictures from children's Sunday school classes brightened the apartment they lived in on the grounds of Nazareth Hospital during the war.

Most of the missiles went over Nazareth, where the Martins lived, and landed on nearby Haifa and Tel Aviv. Nancy saw an explosion caused when a Patriot missile intercepted one of the Scuds launched from western Iraq, some 700 miles away.

"We always thought of it [the distance] as being as far from eastern Pennsylvania to Ohio," Nancy says.

Forty times they donned their "pig's-snout-like, black gas masks" and sealed rooms at Nazareth Hospital and in their apartment on the hospital grounds with a wide gray tape local Arabs now call *Leska Saddam,* or "Saddam's tape."

The Martins wrote a letter to their children in the event they did not survive a threatened chemical attack. They also confess that Nazareth Hospital, which serves the largest Arab city in Israel, was in many ways ill-prepared for what could have happened.

When the Martins first went to Nazareth Hospital in 1965, little did they know that Robert—a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War—would direct his own "war committee."

But each morning of the Gulf War, Robert, general director of Nazareth Hospital, convened a group to evaluate hospital performance during the previous night's missile attacks. Nancy, director of the school of nursing, helped nursing staff seal rooms and helped elderly patients put on gas masks.

"You carried your gas mask with you all the time in a box—sort of like a lunch box," she says. "The Gulf War was our fourth war during the years we were in Israel. We are more committed pacifists than we have been before."

—Tom Price

Mennonite Church women's executive resigns

Elkhart, Ind. (WMSC)—Marian Brendle Hostetler, executive secretary of the Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC) of the Mennonite Church, plans to resign from that office, effective Sept. 1.

Hostetler has served as WMSC executive since 1987. During her term, the organization restructured its churchwide executive committee and moved toward integration with its sister organization, Women in Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

She became moderator-elect of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference in 1994 and in 1996 will become moderator.

Hostetler worked in Nigeria and Switzerland and was program director and teacher at Walnut Hill Day Care Center in Goshen, Ind., before beginning work with WMSC. She and her husband Darrell attend North Goshen Mennonite Church.

"Many Mennonite women no longer need the structure of a women's organization in order to use their gifts in the church," Hostetler says. "But we women still need each other—to strengthen our faith walk and commitment to mission. Together we must constantly seek the uniquely women's ways of being Christ's presence in the world."

The WMSC executive committee has appointed a search committee to find a replacement.—*Eve McMaster*

Alumni group speaks up for Mennonite colleges

Lancaster, Pa.—Mennonite Church colleges have seen 19 percent fewer Mennonite students since 1988, according to a survey by the Mennonite Board of Education.

This trend has prompted a group of concerned Mennonite college alumni here to form "Friends of Mennonite Higher Education." Their mission is to structure a plan of educating young Mennonites and their parents about the benefits of attending church colleges.

Encouraging young people. Since forming in 1992, the group has organized three information evenings attended by Mennonite college representatives, local students, and their parents. The group has also presented seminars entitled "Why Would I Want My Children to Attend a Mennonite College?"

Chair J. Kenneth Brubaker of Mount Joy, Pa., says that a major goal of the group is to encourage those young people who do not have influential role models who attended a church college.

They suggest that Mennonite churches appoint spokespersons to represent the Mennonite schools, inform individuals of special events, and update congregations on happenings within the schools.

The group also stresses the need to continually build up endowment funds and of continued giving by alumni, organizations, and other donors. "People give to people, not causes," says Brubaker. "I think that same principle applies in recruiting for and marketing our Mennonite schools."

A graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, Brubaker says that his experience there changed the direction of his life. "The experience [at Goshen] shaped my theology and made me believe more strongly in our peace mission," he says.

Church relies on its colleges. Brubaker argues that the Mennonite church relies heavily on its colleges. "If we don't [have them], the Mennonite church will have no future," he says.

The executive committee of Friends of Mennonite Higher Education includes Sue Baker, Jon Bender, Jeannette Bontrager, John Denlinger, and Twila Miller.

—Kathy Gehman

Clinic provides healthcare for mothers and children. *Kabul, Afghanistan (MBM)*—Women are examined and treated at the Maternal and Child Health Clinic here. Elizabeth Stauffer visited the clinic and several other projects of International Assistance Mission (IAM) on a short-term MBM assignment. Her husband Don did financial consulting for IAM, a consortium of mission and service agencies in Afghanistan working in medicine, education, rehabilitation, and resource development. MBM is one of the 27 member agencies.

"We experienced the hospitality of people who had little but shared freely," says Elizabeth. "For five weeks we were foreigners who did not know 'the system.' We experienced the guiding and protective hand of God in ways that we often don't recognize in our controlled, predictable North American society. Would we go again? Definitely! We may have something more to offer. We certainly have more to learn."

Survey on views toward church colleges begins

Elkhart, Ind. (MBE)—The Mennonite Board of Education has launched the Gideon Project to learn more about prevailing attitudes in the Mennonite Church toward the churchwide colleges—Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., Goshen (Ind.) College, and Hesston (Kan.) College.

"This is the first phase of a longer-term attempt to bring our church and schools even closer together," says Orville Yoder, MBE president. "We are exploring ways for our schools to rise to the top as the most attractive option for Mennonite college-bound young people."

The project's name comes from the Old Testament account of Gideon, who laid a fleece before God to help him reach an important decision. "We want to lay a fleece before our people to help us choose the best way to go," says Yoder.

The 1996 version of the fleece is a questionnaire MBE is sending to pastors and other congregational leaders from selected churches across the country. Developed in consultation with Michael Wiese of Anderson University, the questionnaire is being mailed to about 2,000 homes.

"We encourage all those who receive the questionnaire to take the 15-20 minutes needed to fill it in and return it promptly," says Yoder, adding that all responses will be anonymous. Plans are to share learnings from the Gideon Project in a consultation of church and school representatives in late March.

Others wanting to share their perspectives may call the Mennonite Board of Education (219 294-7523) and ask for a copy of the questionnaire.

—Don Garber

Evangel '95 inspires young adults to 'take risks'

Salunga, Pa. (EMM)—"I'm not used to celebrating New Year's Eve in this way," one young woman sobbed into the microphone. "But 1996 is going to be different."

She was one of 150 young adults who met at the Marriott Hotel in Baltimore, Md., for Evangel '95, what organizers call the first Anabaptist young adult evangelism conference.

"Risk it all to live the call," was the theme of Evangel '95, directed by Eric Dombach of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Dombach says the conference was designed to give young adults the chance to rediscover the "radical Anabaptist vision for missions and evangelism."

Each morning and evening, participants listened to seminars given by evangelists from the United States, New Zealand, and Germany. Each afternoon, participants performed various projects in inner-city Baltimore including street dramas, evangelism, and community service.

As the conference drew to a close late in the evening on Dec. 31, German evangelist Johannes Reimer called for a period of public confession and recommitment. Participants filed up front to hammer letters of confession and commitment on a wooden cross.

"I haven't cried for a long time," one man admitted. "But tonight, I understand how I have sinned against God and how much he has done for me." Participants then gathered into small circles of prayer.

"It's been a long time since I've witnessed such a deep level of confession," said Reimer.—*Julie Hershey and Jewel Showalter*

Ray Comfort (left) and Gordon Wenger joined others for street evangelism on a sidewalk in Baltimore at the Evangel '95 Anabaptist evangelism conference.

'Working with the goals of ordinary people' in Canada's Aboriginal communities

Winnipeg, Man. (MCC Canada)—About five years ago a group of young people living on Windigo Island had a dream. They wanted to start their own logging and sawmill operation, renovate two old tourist cabins on a nearby island, and build a tourist facility on these ancestral islands bordered by Minnesota, Manitoba, and Ontario.

Today, the projects provide year-round employment for ten people.

"We want to work with the goals of ordinary people," says Robert Miller, community development officer for Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba. "We aren't interested in starting large infrastructures."

Miller and his co-worker Karen Schlichting-Enns are involved in numerous projects with the people living in northwestern Ontario's Aboriginal communities. Miller says their main objective is to help communities take charge of their own social and economic issues.

"We want people to develop the ability to evaluate their needs and create organizational and political structures to meet their needs," says Miller. In many places this is the first time they have received community development assistance.

Karen Schlichting-Enns displays "Gifts of the Creator" baskets, a new initiative of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba. The baskets are filled with wild rice and blueberry spread and sold as fundraisers for Aboriginal communities.

Another objective is to build trusting relationships and greater understanding between Aboriginal communities and Mennonite churches. A new initiative by MCC Manitoba are "Gifts of the Creator" gift baskets filled with samples of wild rice and blueberry spread which have been processed in a traditional manner. Church groups are encouraged to sell these baskets as fundraising projects.

Miller communicates regularly with individuals in about a dozen Aboriginal communities, providing assistance in the establishment of small businesses and community-based action to specific problems.

He describes the Windigo Island project as an "exemplary model for community economic development," and he encourages individuals, families, and churches to consider renting one of the islands for vacations or group activities.

Miller is enthused about a new project underway in Pikangikum—a youth patrol organized by young people in the community in response to the high number of youth suicides in this town of 1,600.

The youth patrol has expressed a need for warm winter clothes and boots, flashlights, training in first aid, CPR, and peer counseling, a building where they can take people in crisis, and a vehicle to transport people to a nursing station.—*Gladys Terichow*

• **Goshen works with teachers.** Students in the Goshen (Ind.) College education department are conducting a series of seminars, field experiences, and research to help teachers teach students with limited English. Each student meets with an elementary teacher from a neighboring school district weekly for two hours through March. The program is funded by a federal Title III grant through the Educate American Act. The findings of research on how teachers can best help students with limited English proficiency will be presented in April.

• ***Living* survey reports.** Some 65 percent of respondents in a survey conducted by *Living* magazine in Grottoes, Va., were aware of the magazine and 55 percent read it. *Living* is a free paper with 40,000 copy distribution and edited by Melodie Davis, writer for Mennonite Media Minstries. Over 90 percent of the readers rated *Living* good to excellent for degree of interest.

• **Tour benefits Cambodia.** "Take Back the Trees," a cross-Canada concert tour sponsored by the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of Mennonite Central Committee Canada and featuring Rick Unruh, begins in Winnipeg on Feb. 24. All money raised through ticket sales goes to MCC reforestation efforts in Cambodia. Other concert dates and times are available from MCC Canada.

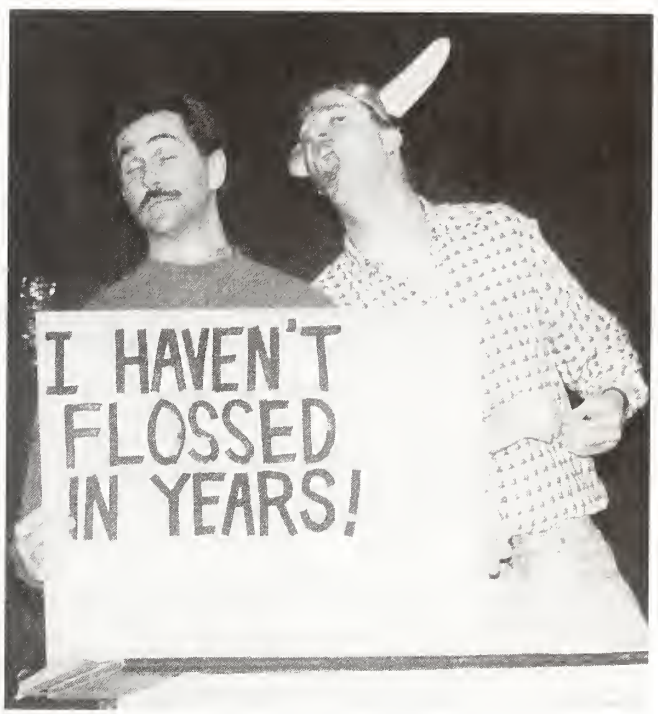
• **New appointments:**
Ana C. Zorilla, director of Mennonite Central Committee Visitor Exchange Programs, Akron, Pa.

• **Pastor transitions:**
Kenneth L. Seitz was installed as pastor of First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif., on Jan. 7, by Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower.
William Wilson recently completed 11 years of ministry at Lakeview Mennonite Church, Susquehanna, Pa.

• **Missionary transitions:**
Laura Schlabach returns Jan. 14 to Mongolia with Mennonite Board of Missions. Her address is PO Box 49/532, Ulaanbaatar 210349, Mongolia.

• **Coming events:**
Spirituality: the Cornerstone for Women in Leadership, sponsored by Nurturing Women in Church Leadership, East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 4. More information from 717 442-9888.
Workshop on domestic violence and sexual abuse, Sioux Falls, S.D., March 1-2. Speakers will be Melissa Miller and David Brubaker. Includes storytelling by survivors, drama, and small-group sessions. Sponsored by the Northern District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church. More information available from 605 338-6020.
1996 Mennonite Camping Association biennial convention, Lakewood Retreat Center, Brooksville, Fla., March 18-21. "Reflecting God's Face" is a conference for camp board members, camp supporters, and volunteers. Jim and Helen Reusser from Kitchener, Ont., are keynote speakers. More information available from 541 994-6850.
Engaging the powers, a seminar exploring the biblical basis and policy issues for a Christian peace and justice witness to the state, March 31-Apr. 2, Washington, D.C. Sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office. Call 202 544-6564 to register before Feb. 29.
The Ministry of Reconciliation, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colo., June 13-15. Conference will focus on resolving conflicts according to biblical principles. More information from Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 708 627-5310.
Voluntary Service reunion of Pueblo, Colo., unit, Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Divide, Colo., July 9-11. More information available from Bob and Glenda Maury at 402 761-2472.
Swiss Mennonite heritage tour, Sept. 16-Oct. 7, with Delbert L. Gratz of Bluffton, Ohio. Tour highlights areas in Switzerland, the Alsace, and Palatinate where Swiss Mennonites lived. Explores religious, historical, and current topics of Swiss Mennonites. Registration deadline is June 10. More information available from Delbert L. Gratz at 219 534-1521 or Menno Travel Service at 800 635-0963.

• **Job openings:**
Dean of students, Hesston (Kan.) College. Responsible for establishing a quality and character appropriate to Hesston's mission and educational goals as a college of the Mennonite Church. Oversees residential and social life, including religious life programming, residence halls, student activities, and counseling services. Qualifications include active membership in Anabaptist congregation, student experience at a Mennonite college, graduate degree in student development or related field, professional experience, ability to work in multicultural setting, and relational and administrative skills. Position available July 1. Contact president Loren Swartzendruber, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; phone 316 327-8233; e-mail: LorenS@hesston.edu.
Director, Mennonite Information Center, Lancaster, Pa. Responsible for vision and expansion, administration, personnel, and marketing. Qualifications include business and ministry experience and skills in communications. Begins midyear 1996. Send résumés or inquiries by March 25 to



What's opera, Doc? *Harrisonburg, Va.*—Mennonite actors Ted Swartz and Lee Eshleman brought their unique brand of zany humor to the fourth annual First Night/Harrisonburg New Year's Eve celebration. "Ted & Lee" unloaded 45 minutes of brand-new original material on an unsuspecting audience that included a spoof of a Norwegian opera complete with cuecards that "interpreted" the lyrics. The duo are becoming known across the Mennonite Church and beyond for combining offbeat humor with homespun wisdom and insight ("The Armadillo Tour") to fresh approaches to telling biblical stories ("Fish Eyes").

Several thousand people braved the rain and cold to attend the fourth annual no-alcohol, family-oriented celebration that offered some 60 venues in downtown churches and storefronts with a wide range of musical styles and dramatic arts. A fireworks display in the square welcomed the new year. —*Jim Bishop*

Mrs. R. Zimmerman, Eastern Mennonite Missions, PO Box 628, Salunga, PA 17538-0628.

Executive director, Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich. Responsible to recruit and supervise staff, develop a strategic plan, budgets, and plans for marketing and development, as well as articulate mission of camp and maintain its spiritual foundation. Deadline for résumés is March 15. Send résumé or inquiry to Search Committee, attn.: Beth Cender, Camp Friedenswald, 15406 Watercress Dr., Cassopolis, MI 49031.

Faculty position in biology, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. One-year sabbatical replacement beginning fall of 1996. Ph.D. preferred. Teaching in mammalian physiology, comparative or gross anatomy, and developmental biology with team-teaching in physiological psychology and general biology courses. Must be committed to Anabaptist-Mennonite faith understanding. Women and minorities encouraged to apply. Send letter of application and résumé by Feb. 29 to Lee Snyder, vice president and academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Information manager, Selfhelp Crafts, Akron, Pa. Qualifications include bachelor's degree in communications, English, art, or liberal arts, strong administrative and communications skills and experience, and working knowledge of Mennonite Central Committee. Two-year, full-time position, available in spring of 1996. Deadline is Feb. 29. Contact Prem Dick, 21 South 12th St., PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; phone 717 859-1151.

• **Change of address:**
The Burning Bush, publication of Franklin Mennonite Conference, 4856 Molly Pitcher Highway South, Chambersburg, PA 17201.

EXPLORE THE INTERNET

Who: Mennonites and Brethren

What: Council on Church and Media (CCM) annual convention

Theme: "Exploring the Internet"

When: Thursday evening, May 30, to Saturday afternoon, June 1, 1996

Where: Toronto Colony Hotel in the heart of Toronto

Details: For more information contact Dave Linscheid, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, phone (316) 283-5100, fax (316) 283-0454, e-mail davel@gcmc.org

NEW MEMBERS

Roanoke, Eureka, Ill.: Kelly Eigsti Kennell.
Rocky Ford, Colo.: Eldridge Saine, Fern Saine, José Contreras, and Dorri Contreras.
Smithville, Ohio: Roxie Ramseyer.
Zion, Archbold, Ohio: Eli Baer.

BIRTHS

Bauman, Susan Isaac and Marcus, Elmira, Ont., Rebecca Elaine (first child), Oct. 2.
Beattie, Anita Chewning and Alex, Orrville, Ohio, Scotland Brodie (third child), Dec. 21.
Clemens, Jennifer Hartman and Bruce, Harleysville, Pa., Jacob Alan (first child), Dec. 31.
Delagrange, Brenda Yoder and Matt, Chesapeake, Va., Ciara Kalynn (third child), Dec. 18.
Gissing, Laureen Harder and Robert "Gus," Kitchener, Ont., Peter Gustav (second child), Dec. 15.
Hines, Carol and Sam, Newton, Kan., Victoria Anne (third child), Dec. 9.
Hiter, Renee Swope and James, Harrisonburg, Va., Jessica Renee, Jan. 2.
Kolb, Sharla Young and Gerry, Souderton, Pa., Emily Beth (first child), Nov. 22.
Landis, Carol Schaefer and Glen, Powhatan, Va., Anna Dorcas (fifth child), Dec. 15.
Lantz, Natalie Cadman and David, Coatesville, Pa., Kent David (third child), Dec. 18.
Metzger, Kate Martin and Daryl, Elmira, Ont., Scott Aaron (first child), Jan. 7.
Miller, Teresa Storrer and Eric, Marian, Ohio, Lauren Kaylee (first child), Nov. 20.
Miller, Anita Schrock and Milton, Millersburg, Ohio, Melissa Grace (third child), Dec. 3.
Murray, Debbie Moser and Steve, Marshallville, Ohio, Alexander Jacob (first child), Sept. 15.
O'Dell, Shana Delp and James "Bo," Goshen, Ind., Brianne Janay (first child), Jan. 5.
Steiner, Donna George and Clint, Smithville, Ohio, Justin Douglas (first child), Nov. 16.
Teichroeb, Nicole Kennel and Tim, Jefferson, Ore., Shayla Nicole (second child), Dec. 26.
Wideman, Caroline Klaming and Fred, London, Ont., Nicholas Gregor (second child), Dec. 22.
Zehr, Jennifer and Stan, Sapporo, Japan, Evangeline Jessica (second child), Oct. 26.
Zook, Marcella Eberly and Kevin, Hesston, Kan., Caleb Jesse (second child), Jan. 2.
Zook, Robin Bentley and Lester, Harrisonburg, Va., Mary Patricia (fourth child), Dec. 13.

MARRIAGES

Chaney-Way: Krista Chaney, Wooster, Ohio (Oak Grove), and Doug Way, Wooster, Ohio, Nov. 2.
DeFehr-Derstine: James Malcolm DeFehr, Winnipeg, Man. (McIvor Avenue Mennonite Brethren), and Heidi Welcome Derstine, Telford, Pa. (Franconia), Dec. 30, by Floyd M. Hackman.
Shifflett-Showalter: Jeanne Shifflett, Harrisonburg, Va. (Church of God), and William Wes E. Showalter III, Harrisonburg, Va. (Weavers), Aug 26, by Arthur Harris and Joseph C. Shenk.

DEATHS

Borkholder, Emma, 87, LaGrange, Ind. Born: May 4, 1908, Nappanee, Ind., to Jacob J. and Anna Schlabach Borkholder. Died: Jan. 5, 1996, Sturgis, Mich. Survivors—children: Harvey, Willard, Lloyd, John, Elsie Helmuth, Mary Miller, Amanda Keller, Sovilla Oaks, Verna Schlabach, Nancy; 31 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Henry Borkholder (husband). Funeral and burial: Jan. 10, Locust Grove Mennonite Church, by Jay Ulrich.

Deputy, Timothy Oliver "T.O.," 80, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: April 5, 1915, Rockingham County, Va., to Mervin and Ola Deputy. Died: Sept. 10, 1995, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—children: Ronald L., Lowell W., Merlin O., Emily Sue; brothers and sister: John, Byard, Mary Catherine Brubaker; 11 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ruth Weaver Deputy (wife) and Margaret D. Lehman (daughter). Funeral and burial: Sept. 13, Weavers Mennonite Church, by Michael Martin, Joseph C. Shenk, and Edith Shenk.

Good, Eula Mary Knicely, 91, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Jan. 15, 1904, Rockingham County, Va., to Joseph L. and Bertha Knicely Good. Died:

Oct. 9, 1995, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—children: Twila Lehman, Emory J., Harley D., Roy F.; brother: Frank S. Knicely; 12 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: E. Paul Good (husband). Funeral and burial: Oct. 12, Weavers Mennonite Church, by Joseph C. Shenk and Edith Shenk.

Hamsher, Ollie Miller, 98, Sugarcreek, Ohio. Born: Sept. 22, 1897, Holmes County, Ohio, to John D. and Katie Ann Miller. Died: Jan. 5, 1996, Sugarcreek, Ohio. Survivors—children: John, Edward, Myron, Reuben, Thomas, Robert, James, Mary Miller, Betty Martin; 29 grandchildren, 54 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Milo Hamsher (husband) and Dallas (son). Funeral and burial: Jan. 8, Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, by Ross A. Miller.

Hunsberger, Charles R. "Chuck," 32, Pottstown, Pa. Born: May 18, 1963, Riverhead, N.Y., to Sharon L. and Gladys C. Allebach Hunsberger. Died: Dec. 23, 1995, Belmar, N.J. Survivors—wife: Roxanne Montgomery Hunsberger; daughters: Stacey, Jamie; brother and sisters: Galen L., Mary Jane Grossenbacher, Stacy Lynn Hostetter. Funeral: Dec. 30, Salford Mennonite Church, by Willis A. Miller and Earl Anders. Cremated.

Hurst, Susan Mary, 51, Lititz, Pa. Born: Aug. 9, 1944, Clay Twp., Pa., to Roy and Emily Walter Hurst. Died: Nov. 22, 1995, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—brother: Walter E. Funeral: Nov. 25, Erb Mennonite Church, by Lester Zimmerman and Lloyd Keller. Burial: Hammercreek Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Hurt, Ida Evelyn Fitch, 89, Hutchinson, Kan. Born: Jan. 23,1906, Missouri, to Henry Fitch and Mary Alice Dibben Haney. Died: Dec. 31, 1995, Hutchinson, Kan. Survivors—children: Warren, Mary Jane Brunk, Geneva Haile, Nellie Geyer; brother and sisters: George Haney, Alice Otstott, Pearl Coe; 12 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, 6 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Owen A. Hurt (husband). Congregation attended: South Hutchinson Mennonite Church. Funeral: Jan. 3, Johnson & Sons Memorial Chapel, by Howard Wagler. Burial: Memorial Park Cemetery.

Litwiller, Elsie Marie, 89, Eureka, Ill. Born: Dec. 4, 1906, Hopedale, Ill., to Daniel E. and Lena Wittrig Litwiller. Died: Jan. 3, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivor—brother: Lawrence. Funeral and burial: Jan. 6, Hopedale Mennonite Church, by H. James Smith and Michael Knowles.

Nussbaum, Marion A., 73, Kidron, Ohio. Born: Sept. 10, 1922, Dalton, Ohio, to Levi J. and Nettie Amstutz Nussbaum. Died: Dec. 28, 1995, Canton, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Anne Lehman Nussbaum; children: Ken, Keith, Karl, Kurt, JoAnne Frey, Judy Kauffman; brothers and sisters: Harold, Leroy, Vernon, Edith Potter, Harriet Noblit; 13 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 30, Kidron Mennonite Church, by Herman Myers and Bruce Friesen.

Snider, Lauretta Schmidt, 81, Melbourne, Ont. Born: Sept. 16, 1914, Elmira, Ont., to Herman and Lydia Martin Schmidt. Died: Dec. 18, 1995, Strathroy, Ont., of heart failure. Survivors—husband: Foster Snider; son: Larry; 2 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church. Funeral: Dec. 21, Ratz Bechtel Funeral Home, by Mark Bers. Cremated—Memorial Gardens.

Stalter, Ezra, 79, Elida, Ohio. Born: Feb. 16, 1916, Allen County, Ohio, to Christian and Salome Good Stalter. Died: Dec. 24, 1995, of cancer. Survivors—wife: Norma Shindeldecker Stalter; children: Lyle, Royce, Marilyn Shoalmire; brothers and sister: Mark, Timothy, Zelma; 4 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 27, Salem Mennonite Church, by Mel Hathaway.

Ulrich, Keith Eugene, 41, Henry, Ill. Born: Feb. 8, 1954, Peoria, Ill., to Kenneth and Ruby Reeb Ulrich. Died: Dec. 28, 1995, Eureka, Ill., of cancer. Survivors—brothers and sister: Rollin, Steven, Debra Handrich; grandfather: Emanuel Ulrich, Sr. Funeral and burial: Dec. 30, Roanoke Mennonite Church, by Cal Zehr, Rick Troyer, and Elmer Wyse.

Ulrich, Miriam Bachman, 79, Roanoke, Ill. Born: Oct. 4, 1916, Morton, Ill., to Alvin and Mary Eigsti Bachman. Died: Dec. 26, 1995, Eureka, Ill., of a stroke and cancer. Survivors—husband: Elton E. Ulrich; children: Douglas, Cheryl Ryniak, Joyce Klokkenga, Diane Geiser; brothers and sisters: Leland, Earl, Harold, and Ivan Bachman, Grace Schrock, Florence Egli; 11 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 29, Roanoke Mennonite Church, by Rick Troyer and Elmer Wyse.

Wenger, John S., 83, Hesston, Kan. Born: June 14, 1913, Canton, Kan., to Jonas and Anna Loucks Wenger. Died: Jan. 3, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—wife: Martha Detwiler Wenger;children: Kermit, Robert, James, Sherman, Oneta Unruh; brother and sisters: Norman, Thelma Egli, Bertha Miller; 14 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5, Schowalter Villa, by Cheryl Hershberger and Wesley Jantz. Burial: East Lawn Cemetery.

Wenger, Mildred Grace Wyse, 83, Wayland, Iowa. Born: Feb. 20, 1912, Wayland, Iowa, to Aaron and Emma Graber Wyse. Died: Nov. 20, 1995, Wayland, Iowa. Survivors—children: Kenneth R., Wayne L., Nancy Ann Burkey; 4 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Ira Wenger (husband). Funeral and burial: Nov. 25, Bethel Mennonite Church, by Duane Roth and Ruben Chupp.

Prayer requests come by motorbike. *Kathmandu, Nepal (MBM)*—Mennonite Board of Missions worker Miriam Krantz recently used her motorbike to deliver prayer requests to MBM Asia and Middle East director Dale Schumm, who was on his way to the airport after an administrative visit to Kathmandu, Nepal. One request relates to Krantz's upcoming assignment to revise David Morley's *Nutrition for Developing Countries* (written for African countries) for use in Asian countries. Krantz plans to spend March through May in London working with Morley.

CALENDAR

AMBS board of directors, Elkhart, Ind., Feb. 8-10
Mennonite Publication Board, Pittsburgh, Pa., Feb. 9-10
WM/WMSC Publication Committee, North Newton, Kan., Feb. 9-10
Christian Educators Event, Los Angeles, Calif., Feb. 9-11
MEDA board of directors, Phoenix, Ariz., Feb. 10-12
Hesston College board of overseers, Hesston, Kan., Feb. 16-17
MCC Annual Meeting, Alberta, Feb. 16-17
MBM Board of Directors, Elkhart, Ind., Feb. 22-24
Orlando CPC meeting, Orlando, Fla., Feb. 23-25

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The Mennonite college and its constituency

Ever since it opened its first college in 1894, the Mennonite Church has had an uneasy relationship with its institutions of higher learning. How uneasy I was to discover as a student at Eastern Mennonite College (EMC) in the 1950s.

In my sophomore year, I was appointed editor of the student newspaper, responsible to report what was happening on campus. One day during compulsory chapel, I looked around and discovered very few faculty members present. So I wrote an editorial that asked why, if students had to attend chapel, faculty didn't.

That question landed me in the president's office. "You can't print this editorial," he said.

"Why not?" I countered with an attitude every bit as arrogant as Keith Graber Miller describes in his article this issue (page 1).

"Because of the constituency," the president said. "It won't understand if it learns some faculty can't always get to chapel." (Years later I learned the president did read my editorial at the next faculty meeting!)

Today my forays onto Mennonite college campuses usually find me in communication classes or visiting with the staffs of student publications. Inevitably I get a question about the constituency: "Why is the church so critical about what happens on campus?" Or: "Why is the church so conservative about education?"

Why indeed? What makes for a relationship that sometimes flames into hostility (as when the church closed Goshen College for a year in the 1920s) and other times becomes a quiet truce (as appears to be the case today)?

Some of the uneasiness may be deserved. As Graber Miller notes, people who work on Mennonite college campuses have their feet in two worlds: the church and the academic community. When the two go in opposite directions, as they sometimes will, the academic world often has the strongest pull.

The history of religious higher education in America is full of examples. In his book, *Church-Affiliated Higher Education* (Goshen College: Pinch Penny Press, 1992), Goshen's president Victor Stoltzfus documents case after case in which former church schools became independent secular institutions, often for lack of interest. The church does well to be vigilant that its schools remain *church* schools.

Some of the tensions may be inevitable. New ideas and the possibility for change always produce uneasiness. Colleges, which by definition deal with the new, can expect to become the focus of questions when the new clashes with current procedures and values.

I suspect, if we're also honest, many of us in the church must also admit some of our uneasiness comes from our fears. As Graber Miller notes, we too have been prodigals. We know how close we came to not coming home. Unlike Jonathan Rich (see page 6), some of us decided to stay in Vail. Knowing that possibility for ourselves and our contemporaries, we fear for those experiencing it now.

But perhaps the biggest reason for the continuing uneasiness between college and constituency is our lack of clarity about what we really want from our schools. As a church, we like it when Goshen College continually gets mentioned by *U.S. News* as one of the best buys in education in North America. We're happy when EMC becomes EMU, adding a graduate program in a value we hold dear: reconciliation and mediation.

At the same time, we send only 15 percent of our students who attend college to one of our schools. We seem to be helping our students choose a college based on values like money or distance—or what we hope is a better education at a more prestigious institution—rather than by those values more closely related to faith.

For those students we do send, we don't follow our educational needs with our dollars. So we force the presidents of our schools to spend more and more time as fundraisers, needing as much expertise in tapping "deep pockets" as in running a quality educational program for the church.

Is it time we take another look at what we really want from our schools? Do we see them as an important arm of the church, one charged with helping our students explore new ideas and find answers to their questions—becoming "concerned, questioning communities in the context of faith," as Rich puts it.

There will always be tension between church and college. The nature of the two institutions assures that. But may that tension also be marked by exploration, trust, and interdependence. These we must nurture if our church is to continue to have strong, healthy colleges for its constituency.—*jlp*

February 6, 1996

The Christian part of the men's movement known as Promise Keepers emphasizes the need for men to return to their responsibilities as fathers and husbands. For more on Promise Keepers, see page 8.

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

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What is this men's movement all about?

It can be a response to men's needs for intimacy, spiritual meaning, and affirmation. However, it also totters on the edge of reaction against the dignity and equality that women have achieved.

by Ron and Arbutus Sider

The sweeping collapse of the family and a seeming vacuum of morality and rootedness in our culture are summoning responses from all corners of North America today. The secular men's movement, met with both rejection and embrace from the church, is one of the voices speaking to these issues.

Statistics that precipitate such debate are indeed disheartening. Half of all marriages today end in divorce. One-third of all children in the United States are born to unwed mothers and fathers. Less than 50 percent of our children live with their fathers and mothers for their full childhoods.

The causes for this breakdown of the family structure include more than just destructive sexual values. Modern industrial and technical society has broken up stable communities in at least three important ways, forcing many men to reexamine their inner and outer lives like never before.

Division of home and work. The realms of home and work were strictly divided during the modern Industrial Revolution. Previously

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Promise Keepers:
A movement of hope— and a wellspring of debate 8

Steve Kriss:
Calling men to life as God's sons 9

Ron and Arbutus Sider:
What does headship really mean? . . 10

'Perspective' by Hansulrich Gerber:
How should we pray for Bosnia? . . . 12

Casino gambling consultation: two sides to every coin (and chip) . . 13

The men's movement answers the search for meaning with another quest—this time a search for identity: getting in touch with the inner source of manhood.

mothers and fathers parented together for seven days a week. The Industrial Revolution sent fathers off to work somewhere and left mothers at home.

As a result, fathers often became more distant from children and engaged in parenting less frequently. In the process, men lost some of their ability for intimacy. We live with the destructive results of this trend today.

Increased mobility. We have become trained specialists to the point that many of us travel around the country or even around the world to find places where our specialty fits. Modern technology, communications, and transportation enable us to move more often and farther away than people used to.

The stable communities in which many of us grew up have largely disappeared. The support that these communities provided for lifetime marriages, sexual integrity, extended families, and a permanent circle of friends seems to be only a shrinking memory.

Radical individualism. Personal self-fulfillment is the highest value in our society. The Enlightenment removed God from the center of reality and placed autonomous human beings there. Today, much of our society believes that nothing in ethics has any universal validity. Post-modernism says that all truth is relative and all that exists are subjective communities of people—women, racial minorities, occasionally even communities of men. These groups are at war with each other, according to this philosophy.

Our whole society senses that something is very wrong. Many are embarking on a desperate search for spiritual meaning and ethical foundations. This common journey doesn't mean that we agree on where to find them.

The secular men's movement answers the search for meaning with another search—this time a quest for identity. The movement is predominantly white and middle-class. It is largely characterized by a psychological approach. Getting in touch with the inner source of one's manhood, discovering the roots of immature masculinity—these are key concepts in a movement specializing in identity issues.

Two of the most popular books in the secular men's movement—*Iron John* by Robert Bly and *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette—suggest that modern culture has abdicated responsibility for mentoring boys into mature manhood.

Moore and Gillette in *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* gives examples of immature masculinity: the drug dealer, the wife beater, the chronically crabby boss, the hot-shot junior executive, the unfaithful husband, the holier-than-thou minister, and the father too busy to attend his daughter's school programs. All of these, write Moore and Gillette, are boys pretending to be men.

Moore and Gillette talk about a system of archetypes in their book, symbolic of four kinds of masculine powers—the king, representing the power of inclusive caring; the warrior, the power of concentrated action; the magician, representing the power of adequate understanding and healing; and the lover, the capacity for empathetic and passionate living. Each of these powers, of course, has its own strengths and weaknesses. The powers must be understood and balanced, they write.

Iron John by Robert Bly is an appeal for a male support structure and male mentoring. Robert Bly's book is more about myths and metaphors based on Jungian psychology than it is about hard reality.

Iron John is a long-haired, wild man living in a deep pond in the forest. A brave knight discovers him, drains the pond, and brings him as a prisoner to the king. While imprisoned, Iron John makes friends with the king's son, who helps him escape, and together they wander the forest. The prince learns from his older friend and through a series of brave deeds is initiated into adulthood and finally prepared to return to the world of royalty. He is reunited

The writers

Arbutus and Ron Sider are members of the New Mercies Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, Pa. Arbutus is a family therapist, and Ron is professor of theology and culture at Eastern Baptist Seminary. Ron also serves as president of Evangelicals for Social Action.

The articles in this issue are adapted from a presentation the Siders made on the men's movements and Promise Keepers to Lancaster Conference last spring. Ron is an ordained minister of that conference.

The full text of the Siders' presentation is available on tape from ESA by calling 1-800-650-6600.

with his parents and wins the hand of a princess for his bride. Iron John shows up at the wedding and gives his blessing. And presumably they all live happily ever after.

Iron John is about the discovery of the wild man within the core of every man and the importance of making that discovery in the presence of older men who become mentors.

A separate but parallel movement focuses on fatherhood. Some arms of the movement—such as the National Fatherhood Initiative—have been supported by the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations in the U.S. Showing a strong correlation between the absence of fathers and many of the country's most pressing social problems, the fatherhood movement emphasizes that being a father is not just about paychecks but about paying attention to your children. A good father spends time with his children, keeps commitments to his family, and accepts responsibility for his children's well-being and character development.

The secular men's and related fatherhood movements respond to the needs for intimacy, spiritual meaning, and affirmation that men are finally admitting. However, the movements seem to lack coherent foundations and totter on the edge of becoming mere reactions against the rightful dignity and equality that women have achieved in society.

Although helpful, the movements don't provide lasting foundations for living together in peace as men and women or for our fractured society as a whole.

The biblical standard of truth and goodness that we see in Jesus is what this desperate and hurting world needs. Submission to all of Christ's teaching means that we as Christians strive to live out joyful and lifelong marriage covenants. It means that we will reserve sex for marriage between one man and one woman. It means we will treasure the joys and responsibilities of marriage and parenting ahead of money, career, fame, and self-realization.

Submission to Christ's teaching means also that we will submit to Jesus' attitude toward women—one of openness, respect, and rejection of social prejudice. Jesus models for us not only how men can live their lives more fully but also what male respect for the dignity and equality of women should be.

A crowd of men gathers outside a stadium waiting to enter a Promise Keepers' rally in Washington, D.C.

"Happy are those who fear the Lord, who greatly delight in his commandments. Their descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed."
—Psalm 112:1-2, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Alleged Misconduct Results in Suspension (Dec. 5). I was deeply saddened to read this news story. Have we as Christians sunk to the level of the media's sensationalism, thinking we need to know all and tell all? When did we forget that people matter more?

You print that these charges are alleged. What if no wrongdoing took place? Then we have just ruined the reputation of a dynamic, inspirational man.

If they are true, then Hubert Brown will have to pay the price for what he did, now and for a long time to come. What good can possibly come from printing this article so that people who normally would not know find out?

I would not expect this from a publication that also printed, in the same issue, a poignant article about our attitudes toward the poor. Should not our caring include all humans, not only the poor? Doesn't Jesus instruct us to love and forgive, not to sling stones or mud?

And I cannot imagine why you would mention that Brown spoke at the Wichita '95 youth convention. If you had been there, as I was, then you know that what happened cannot discount the very moving and inspirational talk Brown gave.

What about all the kids that stood to either dedicate or rededicate their lives to God after that talk? I am extremely concerned that this will damage their tender faith because they are not mature enough to realize that we all fail, even our role models.

I hope in the future, as you seek to inform, that you consider the greater responsibility to love and forgive.

Cindy Kauffman
Goshen, Ind.

Thank you for James M. Lapp's ***Where We've Been, Where We Might Be Headed*** (Dec. 26). The article not only gave us a good overview of the past decade of the Mennonite Church, but it also gives us insight into the quality of leadership we have experienced as a denomination.

I for one congratulate James for the good leadership he has given the Mennonite Church. He has had a fine Christian spirit as he worked with the various district conferences, denominational boards and agencies, and the issues before the church. It is this kind of visionary Christ-centered leadership that makes me feel good about the Mennonite Church.

Paul M. Zehr
Lancaster, Pa.

Vatican Says Its Ban on Women Priests Will Not Be Changed ("Items & Comments," Jan. 9). It's unfortunate that only Frances Kissling of Catholics for Free Choice was quoted as being in favor of ordaining women as priests. I'm certain many pro-life Catholics are in favor of ordaining women.

In his book *An Introduction to Mennonite History,* Cornelius J. Dyck compares a 1972 study of Mennonites with a 1989 study. During this time there has been an increased support for expanding women's leadership roles in the church and an increased resistance to abortion. So obviously those who strongly oppose abortion and those who support ordaining women as ministers are frequently the same people, at least in the Mennonite Church.

This disproves the old canard that people who believe in the legalized killing of unborn children are more sensitive to women's rights than those who believe in defending the civil rights of the unborn.

Jerry C. Stanaway
Lombard, Ill.

Dancing at the Table: Re-imagining the Church ("Mennoscope," Jan. 9). I would consider myself a liberal across the Anabaptist-Mennonite spectrum. But considering the 80 to 90 percentage vote by GCs and MCs in the last decade against gay/lesbian/bisexual activity, listing this announcement on *Gospel Herald* pages again disappoints a majority of its readers.

C. Nelson Hostetter
Akron, Pa.

I'm reading the Jan. 9 issue of *Gospel Herald.* As in all issues, there is much which I appreciate in the form of inspiration, news, and fellowship. So I thank you for all the work you do for the church in editing this paper. And I wish you God's blessing and wisdom in the new year.

Having noted the good in *Gospel Herald,* I must also share that I find disturbing items from time to time that give me the feeling that as a church we

are taking one step forward and one step backward. Slippage and treading water! From the Jan. 9 issue I am deeply disturbed to note that *Gospel Herald* is advertising ***Dancing at the Table.***

Surely you have sat in on the meetings of the Mennonite Church General Board and noted that the decisions are that the General Board is not giving space at assemblies for the Supportive Congregations Network, nor are they affirming its work. It is hard for me to understand why you keep printing items that are contrary to the position of the church, its General Board, and its Council on Faith, Life, and Strategy (CFLS). There are struggles, hard work, and concerns in some of the conferences because of the confusion this creates and the leverage it gives to those who disagree with the church's position.

If this item had been in "Items & Comments," it wouldn't have been so serious. But to have it in "Mennoscope" *is serious!*

I have received several calls, as chair of CFLS, questioning the item on ***Dancing at the Table*** in *Gospel Herald.* So I just said I'd check it out. Thus this letter to you.

Emma Richards
Lombard, Ill.

Surely you have something of more value to put in *Gospel Herald* than ***Dancing at the Table*** (Jan. 9). A blank space would have more value. Are you not supposed to be a Mennonite paper supporting Mennonite beliefs and doctrine?

Loren J. Birky
Delavan, Ill.

We are very much disappointed to see the item ***Dancing at the Table*** (Jan. 9). The Mennonite Church position on homosexuality is that it is sin and not a cause for celebration. And we appreciate the clear and biblical statement regarding homosexuality made by the Hispanic Mennonite Convention.

How can you as editor of the official publication of the Mennonite Church justify an advertisement of this nature? We still feel that the editors are responsible for what is printed and published.

Chris & Gladys Kennel
Parkesburg, Pa.

Is Overseas Mission a Thing of the Past? (Jan. 9) contained a list of questions expressing doubt about overseas mission. One of the questions was: "Is Christianity the only true way to salvation?"

Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). This is the truth. And it is abhorrent to me to even see this question in print.

Of course, there is a correct approach to missions. But let us never question the fact that Christianity is the only true way to salvation!

Susan Farrow
Malone, N.Y.

I just finished reading ***Is Four-Part Singing Really Mennonite?*** (Jan. 16) and appreciated very much the effort of Margaret Loewen Reimer to inform us of a heritage that many of us have assumed had older roots.

Even though four-part singing entered Mennonite worship only in the late 1800s, I would still consider it a blessing. Since coming to Anchorage, the closest thing we have found to Mennonite singing was when we visited a Christian Reformed Church and enjoyed very much their four-part singing—in spite of being accompanied by a piano and an organ.

While I deeply appreciate four-part singing and miss it a lot since we moved to Alaska, I do not believe it is more spiritual than other types of singing. In fact, I fear we have sometimes become too proud of the sound and lost track of the words.

Since I don't write often, would you tolerate one complaint? Did I hear a yes? Why couldn't the publisher print at least one of the new *Hymnal: A Worship Book* in shape notes so this old man could still pick out a tune on the piano and learn some of the new songs. I know it is not cost effective, but I feel better getting this off my chest!

Jim Carpenter
Anchorage, Alaska

A hearty "Amen!" to Marlene Kropf's suggestion (***How Can We Keep from Singing?*** Jan. 16) that congregations spend a third or more of their worship time in singing. This seems like a wonderful way to resolve the music conflicts that so many congregations struggle with—more music of various types can then be sung in any one service.

As a Mennonite currently worshiping with a non-Mennonite congregation, I find myself critiquing theology and doctrine on a regular basis, but what I truly miss most from the Mennonite Church is the singing. I can think of nothing more delightful than to some day worship on a regular basis with a Mennonite congregation that would spend a third or more of their time in song. When it comes to music in worship, less is definitely not more.

Sonya Stauffer Kurtz
Pocatello, Idaho

Stuart Showalter in ***Cyberspace Is also God's Space*** (Jan. 2) had important insights about information technology for our churches. As an excited user of computers, learning the resources on the Web, I make one suggestion and three comments:

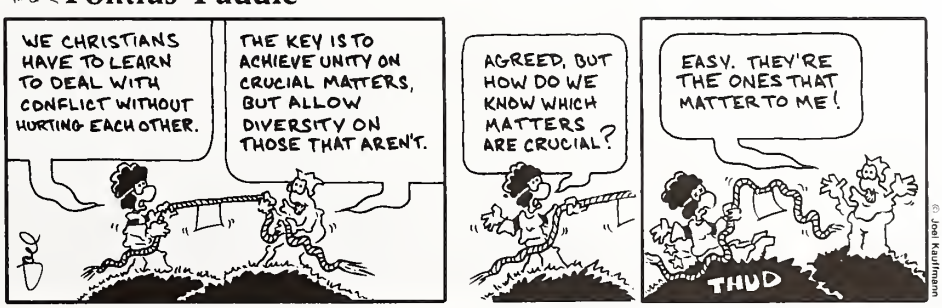
Suggestion: Make it a high priority to have at least one user-friendly computer connected to the World Wide Web in each church office or library. Some users should volunteer to teach interested "have-not" members, church staff, and others on how to use e-mail and Web browser software.

Comments:

1. This, I agree, is a justice issue. We cannot wait for or depend on the edu-

(continued on page 7)

Pontius' Puddle



New Books for the New Year

Abigail

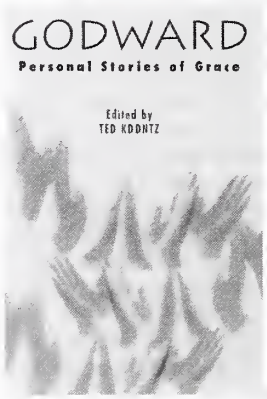
by **James R. Shott**

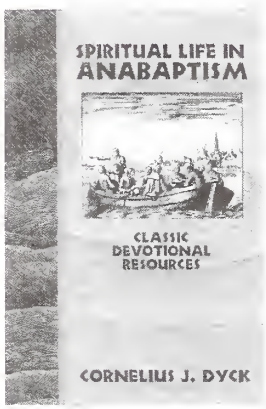
Abigail, seventh in the People of the Promise series of biblical novels, tells the dramatic story of King David as seen through his wife Abigail's eyes. Keeping the focus on Abigail gives this classic saga a fresh perspective.
Paper, 144 pages, $8.95; in Canada $12.80.

Godward:
Personal Stories of Grace

edited by **Ted Koontz**

Godward is a collection of personal stories by 24 Christian leaders who share their journeys in the hope of offering inspiration and encouragement to other pilgrims on the way. The contributors peel back the "public" surface often cultivated by leaders to share the depths from which their service springs.
Paper, 192 pages, $10.95; in Canada $15.75.

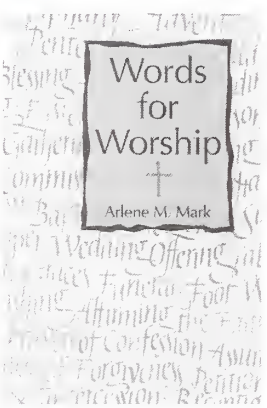




Spiritual Life in Anabaptism:
Classic Devotional Resources

by **Cornelius J. Dyck**

By selecting and translating classic writings on spiritual issues from the early centuries of Anabaptism, Dyck shows that the Anabaptist tradition has nourishing spiritual food for all who are interested in pondering prayer, Bible reading, attending church, work life, and much more.
Paper, 312 pages, $16.95; in Canada $24.25.



Words for Worship

edited by **Arlene M. Mark**

This collection is a ready resource for pastors and leaders, to enrich and deepen worship together. Responsive readings come from all ages of the church—our common Christian legacy. Each serve to build up the faithful Christian community.
Comb binding, 240 pages, $15.95; in Canada $22.75.

Available through your local bookstore or by calling **1 800 759-4447**; in Canada call 519 746-2872 (Provident Bookstores—MC, Visa, Discover). If ordering by mail, please include 10% for shipping—minimum $2.50. Canadian customers, add 7% of total for GST.

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(continued from page 5)

cational institutions of our communities to help the "have nots" among us. Students at all levels will probably have many opportunities to experience electronic communication. My greatest concern is for those adults who have no access. We dare not let children and youth be the only users of computers.

2. We cannot depend on trained computer experts to understand the barriers for the "have nots." Probably a committee to deal with computer issues in the church needs a "have not" member, an excited user from business or education careers, and a trained computer expert from business, industry, or education to take care of the technical aspects.

3. User-friendly computer models are a must! It is clear to me that to reach the average person we will have to do better than a used DOS machine or even an early Windows unit. Many of us just want to get the end results; we do not want to know how to make precise commands that control every detail of the computer's insides.

Stan Grove
Goshen, Ind.

In ***A Few Old-Fashioned Cyberjitters*** (Jan. 2), Valerie Weaver suggests that communication via e-mail is not conversation because it lacks the "grins, hugs, and tears of face-to-face interaction." Using that same logic, telephone communication is not conversation—I can't see the person on the other end of the phone line.

Weaver is right that conversation is enhanced when we are with other people. However, we simply cannot be with everyone we wish to interact with. Cyberspace has permitted me to have meaningful contact with people all around the world who I have never met—the Israeli woman who wanted to know more about the Mennonite commitment to peace; the Texas family who wanted to know how they could find a Mennonite church in their area; the Australian man who wanted to know more about Aboriginal life in Canada; the Palestinian man living in California who wanted someone to hear his pain over the situation in his homeland.

None of these communications took place face-to-face. But it would be incorrect to say they weren't conversations.

John Longhurst
Winnipeg, Man.

Even though I have used my computer system for over four years, I share the concerns the "haves" and "have nots" expressed in the article, ***Cyberspace Is Also God's Space*** (Jan. 2).

My viewpoint comes from two directions. The first is the fact that I am a convert to the Mennonite faith. I point this out because I share the same faith and beliefs as traditional Mennonites, but I do not share a sense of background and history. I see a lot of e-mail traffic by Mennonites who are researching historical topics and are requesting information. Also, many traditional Mennonites I know still have a fear of something new or technical, and that fear is something I cannot fully grasp.

The second part of my viewpoint comes from working in the computer industry for the past ten years. I've written software manuals, curriculum, and various articles about computers. I liked working in the field, and I enjoyed working with my computer at home. I spent many nights—too many—learning new software or just plain fiddling with my system.

Two years ago I started getting fed up with the constant push to upgrade software and hardware for the sake of upgrading. Today I work in marketing and public relations, and I use computers as a tool in my work. I'm not as excited about computers as I used to be, and I strive to keep my computer usage in the proper perspective. I have my own Internet account and e-mail address, but I use them sparingly.

The Internet is booming, like many computer fads before it. Nowadays, people expect anyone who is anyone to have an e-mail address and some form of on-line access. And there's the World Wide Web, the fastest growing part of the Internet. The Web is used by most companies for marketing purposes. It also contains a lot of trash, and just like other mediums such as movies or televisions, it has its share of easily accessible illicit material.

As a Christian, as a Mennonite, as a former technology buff, I have some concerns about Internet usage:

- What are we using it for? If we are knocking down communication barriers of cost and distance, then we are putting it to good use. Exchanging messages with missionaries in other continents or communicating with a former church member who moved away is a good use of the technology. What about an electronic prayer meeting? Will we start to substitute our sense of community for an electronic forum? Will we get to the point we would rather chat on the net than visit someone and talk to them, face to face? I hope we never get to the point where e-mail substitutes for visitation.
- Are we taking time away from God? Think about this: Add up how much time you spend with God in meditation and prayer. Add up the hours we pray or communicate with our Lord, or engage in activities such as sermon preparation for pastors, or voluntary work for laymen. Now add up the time we spend "cruising the web," sending or reading e-mail, including Mennonite-related mail. I would be concerned if our on-line time is 50 percent or higher than the time we spend with the Lord.
- Are we putting too much dependence on computers? What if we didn't log on for one day—can we handle not having someone send us e-mail?

I'm not raising questions to pass judgment on anyone. I'm concerned because I have been at the point where the thrill of the technology became more important than the practical use—where the time spent in front of the tube could have been spent on something (or someone) better.

I'm concerned because I've heard someone tell me that they don't attend their church anymore because their pastor was more of a "computer operator" than someone who was concerned about people.

I'm concerned because I see so many Mennonites using the Internet, and I know how easy it is for time and energy to be consumed by this latest fad without even realizing it.

Computer literacy and the use of the Internet can be a good tool for helping to build God's kingdom. But in the end, God will not be amazed at how proficient we are with computer systems but how we used those skills to spread the Word.

Will Schirmer
Norristown, Pa.

Promise Keepers:

A movement of hope—and a

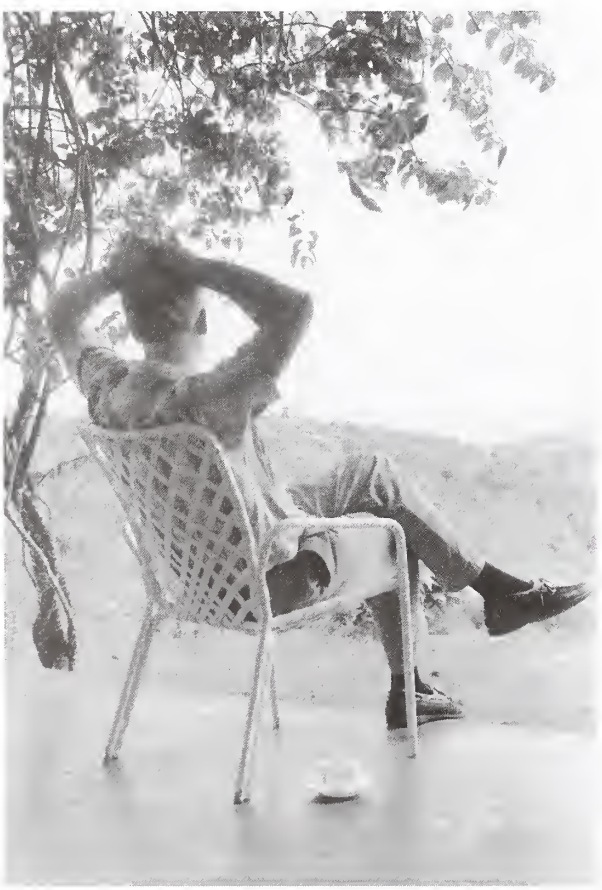
Whatever we think of Promise Keepers, it is important that we not let the potential benefits be drowned by either our fears or misguided zeal.

by Ron and Arbutus Sider

What does it mean to be a man in today's world? What does it mean to be a Christian man?

These questions are prompting millions of Christian men across the country to join a burgeoning Christian men's movement. Promise Keepers is undoubtably one of the largest and most significant movements among evangelicals today. It has also become a wellspring of debate in our churches and families.

Bill McCartney, head football coach of the University of Colorado, began the organization in 1990. Seventy men got together to pray that



year, with the goal to eventually fill the university's Fulsome field with 50,000 men. They met together to honor Jesus Christ and to learn more about how to become godly men.

The movement has grown by leaps and bounds ever since. In 1994, over 290,000 men went to conferences in seven different cities. Promise Keepers is training pastors and lay leaders and has a growing body of literature. In 1995 some 12 to 14 conferences for 600,000 men were scheduled. In February 1996, the organization expects 75,000 clergy at a conference for pastors to be held in Atlanta, Ga. Organizers also hope to bring one million men to Washington, D.C., in a nonpolitical rally in 1996.

These growing numbers signal that the Promise Keepers movement won't be dropping out of the public eye—or arena for debate—any time soon. The Promise Keepers movement is met with unabashed enthusiasm and devotion from some in the church, and with suspicion and hostility from others.

In light of this turmoil, we find it important not to allow all the potential benefit of this movement to be drowned in either fears or misguided zeal.

The Christian men's movement as experienced in groups like Promise Keepers responds to at least five needs of men in our society today.

Identity. Men are seeking to develop and express their distinctive masculinity without offending women or uncritically imitating their fathers.

Officials with Promise Keepers say that many men are emotionally bound up, confused about their identity, and searching for ways to improve relationships. Christians are asking what it means to be a godly man without following the world's expectations.

Intimacy. Put simply, intimacy is getting to know someone from the inside. Men are increasingly acknowledging in themselves the desire for deep relationships with other men. Often they lack the social tools to develop them. Small groups for men are especially suited to address this longing.

Spiritual longings. Men want to grow in faith without compromising their masculinity. One North Carolina pastor put it this way: "Men want to express their spiritual nature, but our culture makes it difficult to do that. The cultural definition of success is at odds with men's spiritual yearnings."

For example, Jesus calls us to serve one another. But success in our culture calls for an

individualistic, competitive passion to get ahead of the next person.

Family needs. Most men want to become better husbands and fathers. A study from the 1970s found that middle-class fathers spend an average of 37 seconds a day interacting with their small children.

Home is a frustrating place for some men because they are not equipped to function as nurturers and therefore feel insecure and inadequate. They spend more and more time where they're succeeding—in the workplace—and less time where they're not—at home.

Role modeling. Bill McCartney of Promise Keepers says that men are looking to form relationships with older men whom they respect and trust and who can help them with problems. Many feel insecure about revealing their vulnerabilities to their wives.

(continued on page 10)

We would add that men sometimes have little

Calling men to life as God's sons

by Steve Kriss

With a background of hoopla and an array of dramatic responses, I attended a Promise Keepers rally in Pittsburgh last September. The single-day "Mega Wake-up Call" was an abbreviated version of the several-days-long events being held around the country. This meeting featured Franklin Graham, Wellington Boone, and Philip Porter as speakers.

Men streamed in from neighboring states to attend the rally. Although the Civic Arena was not filled to capacity, the lines were deep at the concession stands and the tents outside were packed full of wares promoted by the organization.

I had some serious questions about the ideals of the movement regarding women's and men's roles in the home and church but attended with hopes of gleaning some insights and information. I sat down, suspicious and slightly cynical, but wanting to be open. Of what I had heard about Promise Keepers, I most appreciated their efforts to fight racism. This event, though, was attended largely by European Americans.

The praise and worship style singing began, and ready to be critical, I began to participate and listen. Franklin Graham presented the story of salvation and invited men from around the arena to come forward to mark a change in their lives—to become men of integrity.

Either I have heard the gospel too many times, or else the men in the arena that day were hungry. Hundreds of men came forward, smiling or crying. Graham's rather drab message had tugged at the hearts of a wide variety of men. Someone even ran to the front to express his commitment. The moving event gave me chills. I saw men searching for direction and trying to grasp onto something that would transform their lives. So many men came forward that leaders ran out of Bibles and literature to hand out.

After the call to salvation, the messages centered on living boldy for Christ's sake as godly men in families and communities. I tested the words I heard against my own understandings of Jesus and of common sense. I heard very little that made me squeamish.

I did not hear speakers advocating that men should "put women back in their place." I did hear men being called to take responsibility, to be people of integrity, and to be God's sons. Some men may take the messages they hear and twist them into biblical images of male dominance, but we can all interpret messages as we please.

I was moved by the call to commitment. Though I would not always want to worship with the emotion found at the "Mega Wake-up Call," I appreciate the effort to call men into life as God's sons. I am impressed that these events take men from diverse backgrounds and present the messages of Jesus to them in one setting. I am impressed that after this event, I walked back to my car, having high-fived a "Biker for Jesus," sung with thousands of men, and thought about what it means to be a son of God.

Steve Kriss, Mount Pleasant, Pa., edits Christian Living *magazine. He is a member of Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, Hollsopple, Pa.*

Sexual integrity, keeping marriage vows for life, mutual submission in the home, and the building of joyful families—these are probably the most powerful evangelistic moves we can make in this hurting society.

difficulty sharing deeply with their wives but find it extremely hard to be vulnerable with anyone else. They look to their wives for fulfillment of all their emotional needs.

For such men, learning to confide in older mentors may be lifting a significant burden from their wives. Small groups in which men learn to trust each other at a deep level can help strengthen marriages.

Various aspects of the Promise Keepers movement warrant support, such as its call to men to responsible fathering. Promise Keepers recognizes that fathers have a profound affect on their children, even if they are absent. They recognize that we must hold fathers as well as mothers accountable for the care of children.

Another positive aspect of Promise Keepers is its emphasis on personal conversion and relationship with Jesus Christ. Men have too often given the spiritual realm over to women; the low numbers of men in churches too often reflects this.

Promise Keepers' seriousness about racial reconciliation is also noteworthy. McCartney sees racism as the foremost unconfessed sin in America. He says that because God reconciled us to himself through his only Son Jesus, we must reconcile with Christians of different races and cultures and denominations. This is a powerful proclamation when it echoes through a stadium filled with 50,000 men.

We are, however, saddened at the seemingly uncritical patriotism and one-sided glorification of North America that envelopes the movement. Promise Keepers seems to offer only individualistic analyses and understandings of structural problems.

For example, values such as faithfulness to marriage vows are absolutely foundational, but they will not magically solve the problems of marriage and family. Promise Keepers does not address issues like parental leave or the advertising that drives the materialism that can destroy our families.

The possibility of a misguided spiritual backlash against women as a result of some of the movement's language also disturbs us. Gender-role stereotypes that are more cultural than biblical are simply assumed or remain nebulous but are nevertheless given sanction by the movement.

This is exemplified in the words of one Promise Keeper leader who writes: "There can be no compromise here. If you are going to lead, you must lead. Be sensitive, listen, treat the lady gently and lovingly, but lead. Having said that, let me direct some carefully chosen words to you ladies who may be reading this. Give it back, for the sake of your family and the survival of our culture. Let your man be a man if he's willing. If your husband tells you he wants to reclaim his role, let him."

This idea is potentially hurtful because it assumes that a role—not the relationship—guides the marriage. Scripture does not dictate rigid gender stereotypes for husbands and wives on the threshold of the 21st century or any century. It is destructive to try to force every husband and wife into rigid gender stereotypes.

Each one of us is created in the image of God. Each one of us is unique. Our marriages are likewise unique. How much more important to encourage each couple to follow truly biblical

What does head

An issue one soon bumps into in looking at groups like Promise Keepers is the relation of men and women. Some fear Promise Keepers and other Christian men's movements because many of them seem to put their blessing on a hierarchal order in the church and the family based on gender. Or they reassert what many believe to be a destructive emphasis on headship. Thus to evaluate the contemporary Christian men's movement, we must first have some understanding of what the Bible means when it talks about headship.

The ancient world of Jesus and the apostle Paul was neatly organized into categories: masters and slaves, Jews and Gentiles, men and women. Along with these distinctions came clear roles and expectations.

Contemporaries of Jesus and Paul thought husbands were supposed to be the leaders who ruled their families. But those contemporaries also thought women were inferior in many ways that Jesus and Paul did not.

Aristotle said that a woman was intellectually equivalent to a child. Josephus

teachings of mutual submission, mutual servanthood, mutual love and self-sacrifice—and to let the Holy Spirit fill in the details for each individual marriage.

Sexual integrity, the keeping of marriage vows for life, mutual submission in the home, and the building of joyful and wholesome families are probably the most powerful and evangelistic moves we can make in this hurting society. We weep for the way this society has destroyed marriage and fatherhood. And we rejoice with the way the new men's movement, particularly Christian movements like Promise Keepers, call men back to family and parenting.

But we beg our brothers to return to their responsibilities as husbands and fathers in a way that does not deny women full dignity. We must pray together for the grace to practice mutual submission.

...ip really mean?

said a woman's word was useless in court. Women were excluded from the temple except for the women's court, and good Jewish men avoided contact with women in public.

But Jesus traveled around the country with women. He allowed a woman—probably a former prostitute—to wash, kiss, and dry his feet with her hair in public. In spite of their alleged unreliability as witnesses, Jesus gave women the first opportunity to meet him after the resurrection.

And Paul regularly talked about the gospel breaking down traditional social barriers and prejudices. In a time when Jews hated Gentiles, masters oppressed slaves, Greeks scorned "barbarians," and men belittled women, Paul insists that these distinctions are irrelevant in Christ. "There is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Sycthian, slave or free" (Col. 3:11).

Conversations today about male and female roles often stumble on the word "headship." What does the word *head* mean, and what are the implications of it for our lives? The New Testament speaks of the husband as the head of the wife twice—in 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:23.

The Greek word for head, *kephale*, very seldom meant "leader" or "boss." Rather, the word *head* often meant "source," as in the *head* of a river. This radically changes the tone of 1 Corinthian 11:3, in which Paul writes that the head (source) of every man is Christ, and the head (source) of every woman is man. Here Paul also explicitly refers to the Genesis 2 story of Eve being taken from the side of Adam.

One might conclude with a first glance at Ephesians 5:23 that Paul sanctions husbands ruling over their wives: "For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church."

But countless differences exist between Christ and husbands. Christ is true God, the one unique divine Savior. Christ died for the sins of the world, once and for all. None of that is true in the case of the husband. We dare not assume that ruling and governing are parts of the husband's duties as head of the wife.

Also, Paul depicts Christ not only as ruler of the church but also as the humble servant who gave his life for the church. He instructs the husband to imitate Christ's self-sacrificial death for the church in his relationship to his wife.

Jesus and the early church were actually engaged in a revolution in the status of women. Their examples and words to us today are that both husbands and wives can be born again, filled with the Spirit and the Spirit's gifts, and called to mutual responsibility for each other.

—Ron and Arbutus Sider

How should we pray for Bosnia?

by Hansulrich Gerber

The key to answering the question of how to pray in any situation lies in our attitude toward the people involved in the conflict—including those portrayed as the troublemakers.

There is widespread agreement that the world, particularly the West, has lacked moral and political leadership with regard to the former Yugoslavia. What happened in Yugoslavia in 1990 and 1991 was largely ignored as quarrels. There were higher stakes, it seemed to our governments, in the Persian Gulf area. In hindsight, the inactivity or bias of Western governments now makes them responsible—along with irresponsible, power-hungry leaders of Yugoslavia—for letting war break out.

It is important to recognize that the U.S. military under NATO does not enter Bosnia today in the midst of fighting and chaos but after a fundamental agreement has been reached and the fighting has generally stopped. The U.S. has played a key role in forging this agreement, and there is good will on the side of all parties concerned. This is reason to give thanks.

The Dayton Peace Accord envisions one nation with two main entities, it provides for all displaced people to return to their homes or receive restitution, it calls for elections and reconstruction, and it projects a one-year presence of NATO troops as an accompanying measure to prevent fighting from resuming. So the peacekeeping soldiers the U.S. is sending to Bosnia are by no means the only or the foremost instruments for peace in this country.

It is unfortunate that the media in the U.S. are focusing on the troops in a way that leaves the impression that military presence is all that the peace accord is about. There are important other issues related to the peacekeepers' mission. Consider all the social, moral, and economic issues the presence of a foreign army raises. NATO is said to be bringing Ukrainian prostitutes to Tuzla, the American military headquarters, to name just one issue. What will the nightclubs and bars do to the local population? Will they provide for a long-term, sustainable economy?

As we observe this situation, it may be helpful to remember that the early Anabaptists too were confronted with the reality of state force. Although they were concerned about it, they did not give priority to whether the government was doing the right thing. Rather, they viewed the sword of the state as being outside the perfection of Christ. If one assumes that the situation in Bosnia calls for a forceful intervention from outside, then I believe the U.S. peacekeepers' presence in Bosnia should be called "a necessary evil."

What are the things that make for peace? Obviously the peace process in Bosnia takes many efforts, many levels, and many approaches. Some of them may even be "outside of the perfection of Christ." However, the church has something better to offer in response to war and violence than state force does. The NATO presence in Bosnia is unlikely to enhance community, build sustainable economy, bring people home, and foster forgiveness. Nor does NATO have a major role in the tremendous task that confronts civilian efforts and the church in this country as they address civil, moral, and spiritual concerns.

Prayer invites God's work on our own hearts. It will cause us to discern where our loyalties are. And it will help us see all people in Bosnia—victims, war criminals, and expatriate personnel alike—in the love of God. We will discover the church as the body of Christ, at home and in the former Yugoslavia.

In all this complexity, I am convinced that the Christian's priority is to retreat to intercessory prayer. How then should we pray? Here are some leads:

- For the safety and future of the people—Croats, Serbs, and Muslims.
- That in addition to the many who are living witnesses of repentance and forgiveness, many more may have their hearts changed.
- For the unity and reconciling strength of the church.
- For the safety and well-being of the foreign soldiers in the region and their families back home.
- That these soldiers may be realistic about the situation and their role in it.
- That the other governments in the Balkans may give priority to the things that are beyond mere response to force by force.
- For ourselves and our churches. That we may have our eyes opened to see the essence of the gospel of peace and our own need to have our hearts changed so that we do not become cynical or self-righteous and complacent.

Hansulrich Gerber, Tramelan, Switzerland, has served as Mennonite Central Committee's Europe Secretary since 1992. He and his wife, Marlene, are the parents of two teenage children.

Two sides to every coin (and chip):

Casino gambling consultation centers on questions of ethics and reality for Mennonite congregations

Gulfport, Miss.—"The devil invented gambling," declared Augustine in the fifth century. And people who gamble are "thieves before God" was Martin Luther's equally blunt verdict.

The issue wasn't quite as clear at a consultation on casino gambling in Gulfport, Miss., last week.

Sponsored by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), Gulf States Conference, and United Native Ministries Council (UNM), the Jan. 26-27 conference centered on the theological and social ambiguities of gambling and casinos and how churches can minister in gaming areas.

Impact on congregations. Casino gambling impacts Anabaptist ministries in Mississippi, Louisiana, in Iowa along the Mississippi River, and in states bordering Lake Michigan, says Allan Yoder, director of evangelism and church development for MBM. One Mennonite pastor in the Southeast estimates that 50 percent of his congregation gamble at a casino, noting that one man told him "he promised the Lord that if he won, he would tithe."

Casinos brought in $39 billion for states, nonprofits, and companies in 1994, according to a Jan. 15 article in *U.S. News and World Report.* It could make even people opposed to Rook reconsider. As a result, teachers get paid more; schools get better; people get jobs.

David Kniss, pastor of Gulfhaven Mennonite Church that hosted the conference, says that when casinos came into his community three years ago, the issue of gambling was clear-cut for him.

Although he still preaches against gambling and is troubled by its addictive quality, Kniss says the issue is murkier for him now.

"When I sit in my living room, talking with a church member over a cup of coffee about the struggles of employment, it looks a bit different," Kniss told participants. "It's just not as simple."

Numerous people expressed the same questions: what about the church members who have contracts with casinos in construction or communications, or those who couldn't get jobs before and who now provide for their families by dealing blackjack? What about the Native American communities like Pearl River, Miss., where the casino has allowed the tribe to develop a financial base and an element of self-sufficiency?

"We as a Christian community haven't developed a Christian conscience in this area [of gambling]," said Ray Horst, executive secretary of UNM.

That may change. Ten years ago only two states had casinos—now 27 states do, according to *U.S. News and World Report.*

"It's a complicated world. But at the end of all that confusion—tentatively, and with some humility—we have to take stands," said Mark Thiessen Nation, keynote speaker and student of ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary.

'Casinos thrive on greed.' Although the Bible doesn't speak directly to the issue of gambling, said Thiessen Nation, the passages about money in the New Testament all "move in the same direction"—giving generously and not being attached to money.

Casinos thrive on the basis of greed and lack of self-discipline, he said, while a Christian theology of money means "serious discipleship" alongside a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The task of Christians living in a casino community, therefore, is to "live out what we believe about money in such a substantive way that it would seem odd to people to work in an industry that relies on greed."

Chaplain John Landrum (right) makes a point during the consultation on casino gambling as David Kniss looks on.

Apparently greed isn't the only thing that flourishes in casino communities. Before the first casino opened in Gulfport in 1992, crime figures were decreasing by double digits every year, Gulfport chief of police George Payne, Jr., told his audience on Friday night. But from 1993 to 1994, attempted suicides jumped 200 percent. Last year, domestic disputes were up 207 percent.

National crime rates aren't much different. According to *U.S. News and World Report,* there were 1,092 incidents of crime per 10,000 people in places with casinos in 1994, compared with 593 per 10,000 for the entire nation. Casinos also usually drive out businesses and get a disproportionate tax from the poor, according to Thiessen Nation.

Being nonjudgmental. "If the casinos were to blow away in the next storm, it would be great," said one conference participant. "But until they do, we have to deal with them."

John and Linda Landrum, chaplains to the casinos in Gulfport, take a similar stance. "We don't fight the casinos," John told participants. "We can't do anything about that now. But we can minister." He emphasized the importance of being nonjudgmental.

Despite differences on how exactly the church should deal with the issue, participants seemed to agree on one thing (though it wasn't what Luther or Augustine emphasized)—"These people are human," Thiessen Nation said. "We ought not make them out to be cardboard characters or 'sinners' but rather people that Christ loves."—*Valerie Weaver*

An employee (left) at the Lady Luck Casino in Biloxi, Miss., waits for the ball to stop in a roulette wheel as gamblers wait. Mennonites toured several casinos as part of the consultation on casino gambling.

MEDA loans give women in Tanzania some credit

Winnipeg, Man. (MEDA)—Ruth Dueck likes to tell the story of a woman in Mbeya, Tanzania, who sells soda pop near a market area. She is a small business owner eking out a living like so many around her. She is also an entrepreneur and her business is growing.

Not too long ago she was selling about a crate of pop each day. Then came short-term loans offered by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) to women in this agriculture-based community. She got a loan to increase her stock of pop and upped her sales to 50 crates a day. Sometimes there wasn't enough soda for her to buy, so she decided to diversify. A second loan helped her, and now she sells milk and baked goods as well.

One of many. The soda pop seller is one of many Tanzanian women who have benefited from MEDA loans, says Dueck, a credit adviser for the MEDA project in Tanzania. She left Winnipeg two years ago to help launch the new MEDA loan program in the East African country. She was home recently to visit family in Manitoba for a few weeks before heading back to Tanzania, where she works out of Dar es Salaam.

Training is a big part of Dueck's role—helping other staff to design the loan programs and deliver training sessions to borrowers. MEDA offers an 18-week solidarity group loans to women engaged in micro-enterprises. The business owners form groups and guarantee each others' loans. MEDA will soon offer a longer-term loan to individuals.

Small business loans for women is a new banking niche in Tanzania—one that is helping a large segment of the population that can't get help elsewhere. "They cannot get access to capital in the small amounts they need at the bank," Dueck says.

Women are the prime focus for loans, although MEDA is starting to accept applications for loans from men. Women have proven to be good credit risks, says Dueck. Overall, MEDA expects to recover over 95 percent of the loans.

The women take their responsibilities seriously. "Motivation to care for their families is a high priority, and their business is used for that," Dueck says. "The irony is that within the formal sector, many of the loans have gone to men."

Ruth Dueck, credit adviser for MEDA

Worldwide, the majority of MEDA's clients for short-term loans are women. MEDA carries out similar lending programs in Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Haiti, and is just starting in Russia and Zimbabwe.

The Tanzania program has taken off with immediate success; women are streaming in to apply. More than 5,000 loans were issued in the first year of the program, many to repeat clients. This is all in the pilot project in Mbeya, 500 miles from Dar es Salaam where MEDA hopes to begin offering loans in February.

Loan amounts start as low as $100 (U.S.) on a first loan and go up to $600 by the third loan. With each first-time loan comes four hours of training—an introduction to MEDA, a discussion of principles of credit, the value of micro-enterprises to the economy, and managing household and business finances.

Not just good business. This all makes good sense business-wise, but it's also a social justice outreach. "It's offering access to people who are typically denied access," Dueck says. "We're giving them a choice and hopefully empowering their choice for the positive."

So in Mbeya the entrepreneurial spirit is alive. Women are getting loans to sell farm produce wholesale, sew school uniforms, and bake. One woman buys scrap metal and fashions beautiful knives from it. Another used her loan to buy star decals; they now grace the packages of her home baking. And she's selling more than ever.

And the soda seller? She's in line for a third loan.—*Carol Thiessen*

MDS helps in cleanup from floods in Northeast

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) is responding to the damage caused by recent flooding in the northeastern section of the United States, says MDS executive coordinator Lowell Detweiler.

A heavy snowfall earlier this year followed by milder temperatures and heavy rains resulted in serious flooding in some parts of the northeastern region in mid-January. "The whole Susquehanna River region from Port Deposit, Md., up to Williamsport, Pa., will be one of our main areas of focus," says Detweiler.

MDS investigators have also been sent to parts of New York, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland to determine what help, if any, MDS will provide.

"It's a miserable mess," says Paul Brubacher after a tour of the Williamsport area. Brubacher is director of MDS Region I that encompasses most of the flooded area. "Coming into Williamsport from the north, we saw mobile homes toppled, basements caved in, crews trying to shore up basements. Hundreds of homes on the north side of the city had from a few inches to four feet of water."

Laying the groundwork. The priority now is getting the basements cleaned up and heat into the houses. Temperatures have dropped below freezing, and the water and mud have frozen onto carpets, walls, and furnishings. "You can't clean up until the heat is back on," says Brubacher.

MDS is setting up a base in an old fire department building in the area. Crews have started cleanup work, but Brubacher is urging eager volunteers to be patient. "It's going to take a bit of time to get the groundwork laid. We want to make sure things are organized and there's enough work to keep the crews busy."

Crews will be working at many locations throughout Pennsylvania and surrounding states, and many volunteers are needed. Although MDS is still assessing the extent of the disaster, it will likely be a long-term project. Drywall will have to be removed, soggy insulation replaced, and buildings dried out.

People interested in volunteering should contact their unit leaders. Contributions can be marked "Northeast Floods" and sent to Mennonite Disaster Service, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

Mutual aid:
'Not an add-on but part of the essential core' scholars and theologians agree at conference

Elkhart, Ind.—"Mutual aid is not extra credit. It is of the very essence of our life in Christ."

With those words, Dean Preheim-Bartel summed up the discussion of a three-day conference of 100 Mennonite pastors, scholars, and agency workers on the practice of mutual aid. Preheim-Bartel, on the staff of Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA), led the closing worship of the conference, held at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Jan. 26-28.

"Building Communities of Compassion," was a collaboration between the Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS) and MMA—the first such cooperation and "a good model for how church institutions can work together," according to Willard Swartley, IMS director.

Funding for the conference came from MMA, which asked IMS to administer grants to 16 researchers to study and present papers on the theology and practice of mutual aid. The project was part of MMA's 50th anniversary celebration.

"Isn't it interesting how we Mennonites do things?" wondered Theron Schlabach, Elizabethtown, Pa. "First we practice for 50 years, and then we find the theology to fit the practice."

Historians at the conference pointed out that Anabaptist-Mennonites have never been self-conscious about mutual aid but simply did it as an expression of discipleship. John D. Roth, Goshen, Ind., noted that the early Anabaptists wrote about mutual aid as they defended themselves in court or argued about how to interpret Scripture with their Hutterian brothers.

Expression of community. Participants looked at the biblical background for mutual aid from both Old and New Testaments. Wilma Bailey, Grantham, Pa., drew on descriptions of life in Nehemiah to argue that "mutual aid is the only thing that holds the community together when there is disparity of economic levels among its participants."

Willard Swartley, Elkhart, Ind., noted that in the early Christian community, mutual aid was not "an add-on to the gospel any more or less than is peacemaking. It lies at the essential core." He said the early Christians simply assumed mutual aid was part of membership in the community. "What would happen today if we made our health insurance automatic as part of our membership?" he wondered.

But several people asked whether Mennonites practice mutual aid through MMA in the same way that the early church practiced it.

In his opening presentation, Joe Kotva, Allentown, Pa., said that it is "in helping others through mutual aid that we worship God." Kotva wondered how much of MMA's current work could be considered worship, since there is little conscious involvement of its members beyond paying premiums or investing funds.

Beryl Brubaker, chair of MMA's board, said that her board continues to address this issue. "Today we are largely passive participants in mutual aid," Brubaker said. "Most persons don't even know what MMA is doing on their behalf. This passivity and unawareness does not lead to any sense of worship or participation in the community."

The Mennonite difference. "But imagine the Mennonite world without MMA," said Donald Kraybill, Elizabethtown, Pa. He outlined the "Mennonite margin of difference" in mutual aid as expressed through MMA: communication with the local congregation, "sharing funds" which match congregational contributions to needy persons, and care and generosity as evidenced from stories of hundreds of persons MMA has helped.

"There is a Mennonite world out there beyond MMA," Reg Good, Waterloo, Ont., reminded conference attenders. (Regulations prevent MMA from currently offering its services in Canada.) "No church institution is indispensable. There is a danger of church institutions cultivating a dependency in the people they serve."

"We are very mindful in this age of institutionalism that trying to serve everyone does not always feel like that to everyone," MMA president Howard Brenneman told participants. He noted that urbanization, an aging population, and the immigration of new language groups will challenge the church as it practices mutual aid in the future.

Brenneman also noted that the idea of mutual aid is very much alive among all ages in the church and that "it's up to the bureaucracy to tie into that interest."

"Mutual aid" as a concept came into the church through a 1930s graduate paper by J. Winfield Fretz, North Newton, Kan., who also attended this conference.

"This is exciting because it's a new generation," he said during a public interview. "And this is a generation that's not interested in keeping people out" but in reaching out to them through mutual aid.—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Mennonites played a part in *Mr. Holland's Opus,* a recently-released major motion picture starring Richard Dreyfuss—one could say they "blew it."

Actually, members of Sunrise Mennonite Church, Clackamas, Ore., filled 2,500 helium balloons that were used in a parade scene in the film. The project was a fund-raiser for the youth group.

—*submitted by Theresa McDermid*

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The junior youth take recycling seriously at North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo, Ind. Last fall they publicized a paper recycling program designed by a local company to benefit churches, nonprofits, and schools. The youth distributed information through church mailboxes, the newsletter, bulletins, and verbal announcements. The church earns $50 every time a bin in the parking lot is full of paper—and they've filled it five times already.

—*submitted by Miriam Zehr*

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Fifty cents, five-dollar bills, and fifty-dollar bills—in honor of the pastor's 50th birthday, of course—went into the offering plate at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., on Jan. 14. Duane Beck wasn't allowed to forget his birthday when the congregation surprised him with a card shower and special offering during the service—even though he preached that morning. The offering, given in increments of fifty, was directed to the building fund.

—*submitted by Sue Conrad*

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"Let's send Daryl to play golf," was the challenge someone dreamed up at Austin (Tex.) Mennonite Church last summer. Members of the congregation raised money to send Daryl Hostetler to the "Wholly Open" golf and tennis tournament benefiting Foundation for the Homeless, Inc. The foundation is made up of 37 churches whose mission is to alleviate the suffering of homeless people in Austin. Hostetler was one of 144 golfers who took to the course to raise more than one-fifth of the Foundation's operating budget.

—*Foundation for the Homeless*

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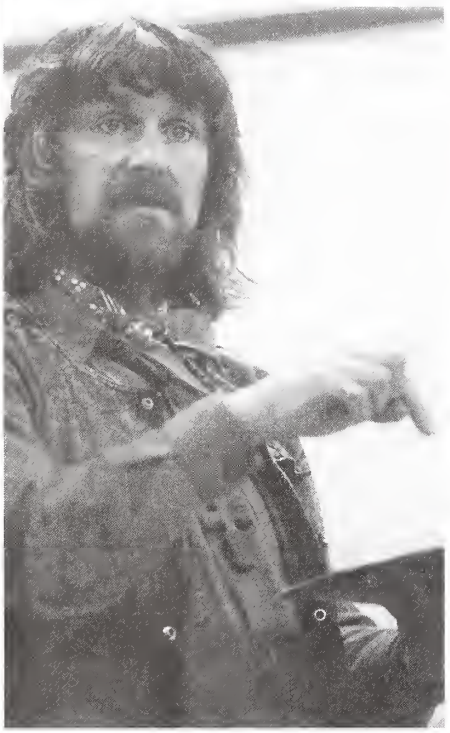
Bombies turned to filmy white doves on the Christmas tree at Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church this year. Each unattractive bombie ornament was replaced with a dove as a donation of $10 was received. The funds went to the Mennonite Central Committee project of clearing unexploded bombs from Laos left over from the Vietnam War.

—*Mennonite Weekly Review*



Both resembling and sounding the prophet, John Bell from the Iona Community in Scotland speaks at the 1996 School for Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite University, held Jan. 15-18. "We have this mistaken notion that the Spirit's purpose is to come and make everything nice and tidy," he said.

'Holy Spirit provokes as much as pacifies' says Scottish minister at leadership training

Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)—"The Holy Spirit is God's free-ranging bird of love . . . the Holy Spirit is not meant to be private property; the Spirit may speak to individuals, but the message should be authenticated by the community of faith. . . . The Spirit provokes us as much as pacifies us. We have this mistaken notion that the Spirit's purpose is to come and make everything nice and tidy."

Statements like these from guest speaker John L. Bell abounded during the 1996 School for Leadership Training, held Jan. 15-18 at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. The four-day program drew 190 pastors, students, and lay leaders from 11 states.

Bell, a native of Scotland and an ordained minister in the Church of Scotland, gave the keynote address and three additional presentations on the theme, "The Life of the Spirit in Community." He is a member of the Iona Community, an ecumenical Christian movement, and a founder of the Wild Goose Resource Group, which offers help in areas of worship and music to churches and Christian organizations.

Bell said the dove as symbol of the Holy Spirit should not imply passivity. "The dove comes as comforter, to strengthen, toughen, and energize God's people. My Celtic forebears chose the wild goose as a Spirit symbol—to reflect the surprising, unexpected work of God."

Thirteen classes were offered each day on special interest topics related to the overall program theme, ranging from "Spiritual Life in the Cell Church" to "Singing in Community."

Worship, music, prayer, and fellowship figured prominently in the program. Activities included a concert of Celtic music by Greg Boardman of Portland, Maine, a banquet, and a traveling photography exhibit, "Images of the Spirit." The week closed with communion led by Duane M. Sider, moderator for the leadership school.

—*Jim Bishop*

Survey shows most leaders support Mennonite ads

Harrisonburg, Va. (MBM)—Two advertisements in *Newsweek* in 1993 and two 1995 ads in *Parents* magazine broke ground for the Mennonite Church in nationwide advertising. A recent survey of church leaders revealed support for proceeding with future ads addressing violence in society.

Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) Media Ministries staff surveyed a sampling of Mennonite Church leaders including conference mission leaders, urban ministry directors, and church staff.

Of those surveyed, 96 percent responded positively to the idea of creating ads about violence.

More than two-thirds were aware of the first ad in *Newsweek*, "Working Late Again?" and 88 percent felt very positive or somewhat positive about it. Three-fourths of the leaders were aware of the ad, "Muscular Christianity," which appeared in a July 1993 *Newsweek*, but only 68 percent were very positive or somewhat positive; 17 percent said they had somewhat or very negative feelings about that ad, which some objected to as immodest.

About half were aware of the "I'm Sorry" ad, which the Mennonite Church placed in the April and June 1995 issues of *Parents*; 83 percent were very or somewhat positive about that ad.

"Continue to emphasize the community and family aspect of church without the clichés," one person wrote. "Nonchurched visitors in our urban church were amazed at the sense of safety and support they experienced in the group."

Media Ministries also tracked reader response to the ads. They included 264 calls for both ads in *Parents*, 83 calls for the first ad in *Newsweek*, and 173 calls for the second. The *Newsweek* ads reached about four million readers. *Parents* has a circulation of 1.4 million readers in North America.

—*Melodie Davis*

Maclin resigns post as AAMA president

Hampton, Va.—Stan Maclin resigned from his post as president of the African-American Mennonite Association (AAMA) at a January board meeting in Chicago. He has served on the AAMA board since 1987 and as president since 1989.

Maclin will continue on the board until August in the area of special assignments. He says he plans to continue freelance speaking and consulting in the areas of churches in mission and inclusivity issues. Leslie Francisco III of Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va., succeeds him.

Maclin says that when he began his first term as president of AAMA, he sensed alienation between AAMA and the program boards of the Mennonite Church. But all that has changed, says Maclin. "There is a tremendous climate of partnering together now. There are winds of change all over the Mennonite Church right now."

He says the appointment of the moderator-elect of the Mennonite Church and hiring of the head of Mennonite Board of Missions, both African-Americans, are steps in the right direction. "The church has taken an attitude of inclusiveness—not just in a "token" posture but also in policy and decision-making."

AAMA is an associate group of the Mennonite Church General Board which administers the affairs and concerns of African-American Mennonites.

• **Shirk Charles named minister.** Sylvia Shirk Charles begins duties as minister at Goshen (Ind.) College on Aug. 1. She replaces Martha Smith Good, who has served in the full-time faculty position since the fall of 1988. Shirk Charles spent four years as pastor at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. She graduated from Goshen College and earned a master's degree in theology from Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass. She is currently enrolled in the master of divinity program at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Shirk Charles says her personal goals include helping with campus efforts against racism, providing more worship experiences, and encouraging students with skills and calls to ministry.—*Goshen College*

• **New appointments:**

Mike Ford, program director of Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa.

R. Wendell Sauder, associate director of development at Hesston (Kan.) College.

• **Pastor transitions:**

Blaine Detwiler was installed as pastor of the Lakeview Mennonite Church, Susquehanna, Pa., on Jan. 7, by overseer Ben Lapp.

Leona Gingerich was appointed minister of music at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

• **Coming events:**

The Tie That Binds: Exploring Links to the Larger Church, Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., 7:30 p.m., Feb. 8. Mennonite historians John L. Ruth and James C. Juhnke will discuss the past and future of Mennonite identity and faith in light of integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. Organized by five Mennonite congregations in the Lancaster area.

• **New books:**

Abigail by James R. Shott is the seventh volume in "People of the Promise" series of biblical novels. It tells the story of King David through the eyes of Abigail. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

Godward: Personal Stories of Grace is a collection of personal experience stories by 24 Christian leaders who have served the church as writers, teachers, missionaries, institutional staff, and more. Edited by Ted Koontz. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

Words for Worship is a collection of worship resources from the Anabaptist tradition edited by Arlene M. Mark. Includes pieces on community, peace and justice, service and obedience, along with adoration, atonement, and assurance. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

• **New resources:**

1995-96 Speakers' Bureau catalogue of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., lists EMU staff and faculty available for presentations to churches, schools, clubs, and civic groups. Subjects include biblical inspiration and church-related themes, home and family life issues, professional topics, teaching and education, and arts and entertainment. Contact Jennifer North Bauman at 540 432-4203; e-mail baumanj @emu.edu for a free copy.

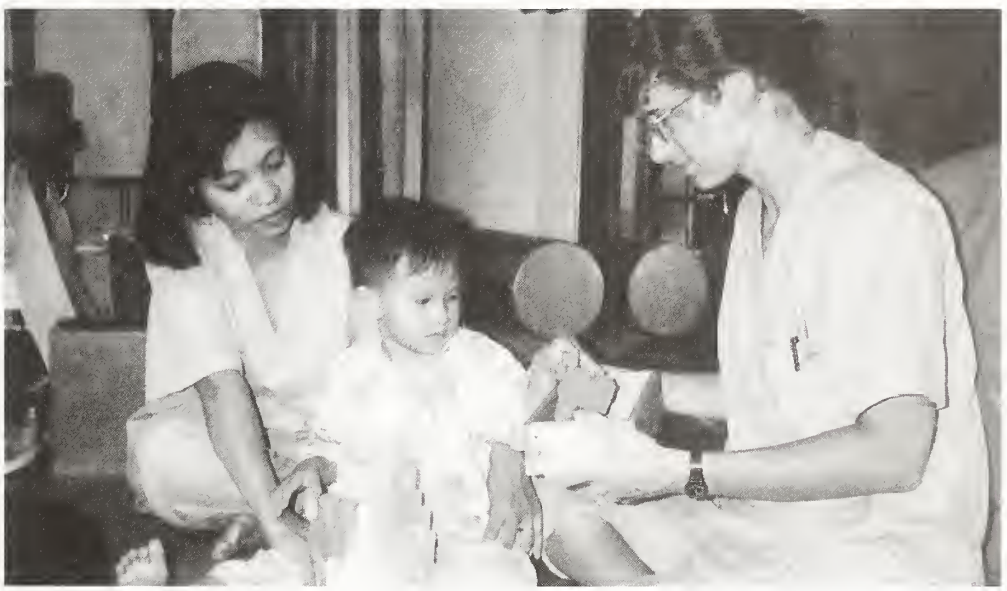
• **Job openings:**

Administrative assistant, Mennonite Central Committee personnel services, Akron, Pa. Qualifications include training and experience in personal computer database management, word processing and spreadsheet programs; organizational, secretarial, and communications skills. Full-time, two-year position available May 1, 1996. Applications due April 1, 1996. Contact Goldie Kuhns, 21 South 12th St., PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

Director of Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa. Responsible to administer program, supervise staff, and manage budgets of the YES and VS programs. Full-time position begins May 13, 1996. Administrative experience required, along with vision for equipping youth and young adults for ministry. Bachelors degree preferred. Send résumé to Eastern Mennonite Missions, attn: Lamar Myers, PO Box 628, Salunga, PA 17538-0628; phone 717 898-2251.

Director of information services, Philhaven behavioral healthcare services, Mt. Gretna, Pa. Provides departmental leadership including strategic planning and some programming. Leadership ability and 3-5 years of information technology experience required. Knowledge of UNIX, ORACLE, Powerbuilder, or other 4 GL preferred. Send letter and résumé to Human Resources, Philhaven, PO Box 550, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064; fax 717 270-2455.

Faculty position in chemistry, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. One-year sabbatical replacement beginning fall 1996. Ph.D. preferred. Primary teaching responsibilities in organic and life science chemistry. Women and minorities encouraged to



Children with cerebral palsy learn through play. *Hanoi, Vietnam (MCC)*—Mennonite Central Committee worker Gail Dick (right) and her colleague Phan Thi Phuong Lien, help a 4-year-old child disabled by cerebral palsy develop hand skills through play activities. Dick, an occupational therapist, works with children disabled by cerebral palsy at the Institute for the Protection of Children's Health here. Rehabilitation for disabled people has only been included in Vietnam's health system since 1986. Dick works to help disabled persons become more independent. Focusing on what a disabled child can do—a developmental approach to therapy—is still a new idea in Vietnam. In 1994 Dick and a team of doctors and therapists set up a pilot project to model this approach. They organized two groups of disabled children and their parents to each meet six mornings a week. These groups give disabled children's parents a chance to meet and share experiences while their children play. In Vietnam disabled persons are often hidden away. This is particularly problematic for children, whose physical, social, and language development depends upon interaction with peers.—*Betsy Headrick McCrae*

apply. Send letter and résumé by Feb. 29 to Lee Snyder, vice-president and academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Manager, Selfhelp and thrift store, Iowa City, Iowa. Send résumé to Marilyn Hershberger, 1523 120th St., Wayland, IA 52654; phone 319 256-7851.

Staff positions, Bethany Birches Camp, Bridgewater Corners, Vt. Includes counselors, cook, assistant cook, assistant program director, lifeguard, nurse, maintenance leader, and kitchen and maintenance assistants. More information from Bethany Birches Camp, PO Box 145, Bridgewater Corners, VT 05035; phone 802 672-3488.

NEW MEMBERS

Bahia Vista, Sarasota, Fla.: Carol Clark, William Dunn, Irene Dunn, Kirby and Yvonne Keim, and Ezra Beachy.

Dayspring Christian Fellowship, North Canton, Ohio: Linda Bennett, Carol Bolek, Joanne Horner, Terry Horner, Denver Steiner, and Joshua Wolf.

Fairview, Albany, Ore.: Brad Ils.

Followers of Jesus, Brooklyn, N.Y.: Wole Olowoyo, Renee Pollard, Ashadee Pollard, Olabisi Olowoyo, Janine Pollard, Judith Hoffman, Richard Schwartz, Anson Ropp, Marita Stutzman, Rebecca Byler, Mary Roth, and Valerie Eboum.

Gulfhaven, Gulfport, Miss.: Tommy Tiblier, Cathy Tiblier, Tommy Tiblier, Jr., Jane Tiblier, and Billy Barnett.

Kingview, Scottdale, Pa.: Scott Clausner, Elida Clausner, Doug Coffman, Angie Peterson, Linda Koch, Robert Koch, Merv Stutzman, Rose Stutzman, and Dan Moon.

North Main Street, Nappanee, Ind.: Marvin and Leona Stutzman.

Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.: David Fast, Jason Herr, Diane Moore, Jeremy Shenk, and Jeremy Yoder.

Plato, LaGrange, Ind.: LeEtta Miller.

Salem, Ore.: Margaret Aeschliman, Orrin Berg, Ruby Berg, Jon Newswanger, Glenn Yutzie, and Mabel Yutzie.

Sandy Hill, Coatesville, Pa.: Laura Hershey, Sarah Hershey, Kristen Kauffman, Andrea King, Theresa King, Sherry Smoker, and Daryl Stoltzfus.

Sharon, Plain City, Ohio: Howard and Jean Schmitt.

Swamp, Quakertown, Pa.: Jim Carroll, Denise Carroll, Maureen Daley, Wilmer Denlinger, Bertie Denlinger, Krista Geissinger, Laura Geissinger, Dawn Longacre, Fred McLaughlin, Liz McLaughlin, Alana Rosenberger, and Derek Rosenberger.

Western, Salem, Ore.: Tim and Susan Arnhold, Bob and Joan Baker, Jim and Betty Boettger, Jyl Boettger, Kendra Boettger, Pam Fahndrich, Serge and Dora Ivanitsky, and Willie and Adria Miller.

BIRTHS

Adams, Lori Roth and Dale, Sitka, Alaska, Levi (second child), Jan. 2.

Cahill, Tara and Robert, Greencastle, Pa., John Paul (third child), Dec. 19.

Chenowith, Melissa Baer and J. R., Timonium, Md., Russell Edward (first child), Dec. 27.

Cressman, Corinne Barndt and Michael, Acton, Mass., Ross Michael (second child), Dec. 27.

Dow, Rosalie Rolon and Leonard, Philadelphia, Pa., Carmela Renee (first child), Dec. 23.

Evers, Kelly Larson and Brad, Dallas, Ore., Dustin Samuel (second child), Jan. 6.

Farmwald, Vicki Shelly and Hal, Wakarusa, Ind., Tanner Jackson (second child), Dec. 17.

Froese, Lori Kroeker and Ken, Okemos, Mich., Esra Vaughn (first child), Dec. 30.

Geib, Cheryl Metzler and Daniel, Lancaster, Pa., Jason Wayne (fourth child), Nov. 27.

Hall, Kerry Stutzman and Steven, Baker City, Ore., Dayton Michael (first child), Jan. 11.

Hochstetler, Ronalee Hart and Gary, Millersburg, Ohio, Tyler David (second child), Jan. 13.

Hoover, Rita Good and Kevin, Schwenksville, Pa., Travis Miles (third child), Dec. 29.

Huebert, Irma Webb and Barry, Tofield, Alta., Brooke Natalie (second child), Jan. 2.

Janzen, Linda Enns and Gordon, Elkhart, Ind., Maya Joelle Enns (third child), Jan. 8.

Kilmer, Jodi and Ron, Glendale, Ariz., Michael Bryan (second child), Jan. 2.

Landis, Pam and Ken, Orrville, Ohio, Sara Dawn (second child), Jan. 15.

Lehman, Dixie Widrick and Mark, Lowville, N.Y., Courtney Ann (first child), Dec. 31.

Leichty, Betty Jo Stuckey and Roland, Wakarusa, Ind., Jennifer Marie (fourth child), Dec. 31.

Loving, Jodie Miller and Jeremy, Lockridge, Iowa, Ashley Jane (first child), Dec. 31.

Martin, Barbara Lehman and Don, Baltimore, Md., Timothy Lehman (second child), Oct. 18.

Neuschwander, Katherine Steckly and Leon, Albany, Ore., Elizabeth Anne (second child), Jan. 6.

Sauder, Esmeralda Avina and Daniel, Archbold, Ohio, Daniel Joseph (first child), Dec. 31.

Selzer, Dana Jackson and Jeff, Goshen, Ind., Quintin Alan (first child), Dec. 22.

Steiner, Rhoda Hostetler and Dallas, Orrville, Ohio, Jia Dawn (fifth child), born July 23, 1992, received for adoption Dec. 17, 1995.

Wenger, Chris Grove and Brent, Goshen, Ind., Lauren Elizabeth (second child), Jan. 12.

Yoder, LeAnne and Wayne, Shipshewana, Ind., Rachel Lee (fourth child), Jan. 2.

Young, Tonya Detwiler and Douglas, Telford, Pa., Ashley Noelle (first child), Jan. 15.

Zehr, Jennifer Gingerich and Steve, New Hamburg, Ont., Daniel Steven (second child), Jan. 7.

MARRIAGES

Axlid-Schaefer: Gunnar Axlid, Sweden, and Debbie Schaefer, Glendale, Ariz. (Trinity), Jan. 6, by Stan Shantz and Rick Krug.

Brubaker-Roth: Steven Brubaker, McGaheysville, Va. (Community), and Bettie Roth, McGaheysville, Va. (Episcopal), Dec. 30, by Jane H. Peifer.

Clemmer-Hunsberger: Ronald C. Clemmer, Telford, Pa. (Salford), and Carla S. Hunsberger, Telford, Pa. (Blooming Glen), Jan. 6, by Craig Morton and David Stevens.

Coblentz-Santana: Brenda Coblentz, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Fol-

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lowers of Jesus), and Peter Santana, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Followers of Jesus), Dec. 16, by Allen Roth.

Gerber-Pallack: Ronald Gerber, Hartstown, Pa. (Sunnyside), and Wendy Pallack, Atlantic, Pa. (Calvary Bible), Dec. 30, by Nelson Martin.

Rowley-Wilder: Larry Rowley, Colorado Springs, Colo. (Episcopal), and Karla Wilder, Colorado Springs, Colo. (Bahia Vista), Nov. 25, by Ben Eberly.

Sell-Yutzie: Jason Sell, Salem, Ore. (Lutheran), and Elizabeth Yutzie, Salem, Ore. (Salem), Dec. 23, by Carl Newswanger.

Sommers-Zoeller: Robert Sommers, Marion, Ind. (Howard-Miami), and Kristin Zoeller, Hamburg, N.Y. (Baptist), Nov. 11, by Charles Benedict.

DEATHS

Bawel, Daniel E., 70, Belleville, Pa. Born: June 24, 1925, to Benjamin H. and Sara C. Yoder Bawel. Died: Jan. 11, 1996, Belleville, Pa. Survivors—brothers: John Y., Noah B. Funeral and burial: Jan. 14, Locust Grove Mennonite Church, by Jesse L. Yoder, Erie Renno, and Jesse A. Bawel.

Esch, Geraldine F. Weirich, 56, Goshen, Ind. Born: April 19, 1939, Nappanee, Ind., to Milo and Verda Bollman Weirich. Died: Jan. 2, 1996, Goshen, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—daughters: Katrina Esch Schrock, Carla Esch Wilson; parents; brothers and sisters: Don and Dean Weirich, Loretta Hostetler, Janet Eby. Funeral: Jan. 4, Waterford Mennonite Church, by Lloyd L. Miller, Sylvia Shirk Charles, and Marvin D. Yoder. Burial: Grace Lawn Cemetery.

Linder, Helen J., 89, Louisville, Ohio. Born: Oct. 1, 1906, Harrisonburg, Ohio, to Eli and Lizzie Schmucker Linder. Died: Jan. 9, 1996, of a heart attack. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Curtis, Leonard, Earl, Eva, Lena, Luella, Ada Yoder. Funeral and burial: Jan. 13, Beech Mennonite Church, by Melvin Leidig and Dan and Rose Graber.

Litwiller, Oliver, 86, Hopedale, Ill. Born: Feb. 11, 1909, Hopedale, Ill., to John and Phoebe Good Litwiller. Died: Jan. 12, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivors—wife: Vera Slabaugh Litwiller; sons: Kenneth, John, Fred; brothers and sisters: Elmer, Clayton, Milton, Clara Hartman, Ruth Imhoff, Lila Hartman, Velma Wiebe; 12 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Jan. 15, Hopedale Mennonite Church, by H. James Smith.

Moyer, Mary Godshall, 82, Sellersville, Pa. Born: Oct. 9, 1913, Franconia, Pa., to Hiram and Maggie Freed Godshall. Died: Jan. 7, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—sisters: Miriam Hedrick, Marguerite Barndt, Amanda Moyer, Ethel Kleiner, Arlene Heller, Regina Nunan. Predeceased by: LeRoy R. Moyer (husband). Funeral: Jan. 10, Rockhill Mennonite Community Church, by David A. Stevens, Truman H. Brunk, and Wellington Alderfer. Burial: Blooming Glen Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Rupp, Harold E., 70, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Feb. 2, 1925, Archbold, Ohio, to William and Katie Roth Rupp. Died: Jan. 6, 1996, Wauseon, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Marjorie Miller Rupp; children: Steven, Linda Eichorn; 6 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10, Tedrow Mennonite Church, by James Miller. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Schmidt, Edna Nikkel, 79, Hesston, Kan. Born: Nov. 16, 1916, Harvey County, Kan., to Abraham and Sara Dyck Nikkel. Died: Jan. 8, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—husband: Wilbur Schmidt; daughters: Joyce Woods, Jolene Schmidt; brothers: Homer and Harold Nikkel; one grandchild. Predeceased by: Jerald (son). Funeral: Jan. 11, Whitestone Mennonite Church, by Ronald Guengerich and Louise Wideman. Burial: Hoffnungsau Cemetery.

Shrock, Edna Marie Miller, 56. Born: Jan. 31, 1939, Dover, Del., to Joseph D. and Malinda Miller. Died: Jan. 6, 1996, Hershey, Pa. Survivors—husband: Mahlon Shrock; children: Melvin, Linda Varner; mother; brother and sisters: Leroy Miller, Rhoda Miller, Lydia Mae Hostetler; 6 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10, Mattawana Mennonite Church, by M. Leon Yoder and Don Pangburn. Burial: Pleasant View Cemetery.

Stoll, Fannie J. Hostetler, 95, Lebanon, Ore. Born: June 27, 1900, Wisconsin, to Jacob and Lidia Miller Hostetler. Died: Jan. 1, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—stepchildren: Ruth Shrock, Ella Boss, Doris Eby, Carol Hensley, Paul, Waren, Raymond, Roger, Ivan, Joe, Lloyd, Ron, Roy; 79 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Joseph Stoll (husband), 2 sons, and 2 daughters. Funeral: Jan. 3, Jost Funeral Home, by David Stutzman. Burial: Hopewell Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Sutter, Stella Miller, 77, Kouts, Ind. Born: March 30, 1918, Kouts, Ind., to John and Lizzie Miller. Died: Sept. 25, 1995, Kouts, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Harold Sutter; children: Don, Pat Bechtel; brother and sisters: Orie Reinhardt, Mary Gibson Hooley, Mabel Schweitzer, Florence Martin, Delcie Martin; 4 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Beverly Sutter (daughter). Funeral and burial: Sept. 28, Hopewell Mennonite Church, by John F. Murray and Jerry Kandel.

Widmer, Henry, 89, Wayland, Iowa. Born: July 9, 1906, Washington County, Iowa, to Christian G. and Elizabeth Rediger Widmer. Died: Jan. 8, 1996, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Survivors—wife: Gladys Roth Widmer; children: Richard, Melba; brothers and sisters: Paul, Rueben, J. Glen, Daniel, Mary Wenger, Frieda Freyenberger; 3 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Jan. 14, Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, by Roger Farmer and Ruben Chupp.

Zaerr, Inez Short, 96, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Nov. 14, 1899, Archbold, Ohio, to Aaron and Sarah Rupp Short. Died: Jan. 11, 1996. Survivors—children: Maurice, Wayne, Eugene, Vieanna Fielitz; brother and sisters: Earl, Ruth, and Marie Short; 15 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, 11 great-great-grandchildren, 10 step-great-grandchildren, 4 step-great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Raymond Zaerr (husband), Curtis Zaerr (son). Funeral: Jan. 15, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman, Lois Hartman, and Charles Gautsche. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Church planter wins essay award. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM-CHM)*—Lemuel and Leona So (center) discuss Lemuel's award-winning essay with Hugh and Janet Sprunger, Chinese ministries coordinators for Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Lemuel So recently won the Anabaptist history and faith essay contest for North American Chinese Mennonites. So is a church planter in Philadelphia, Pa., with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and editor of a newsletter for Chinese Mennonites. The essay contest is designed to encourage Chinese Mennonites not only to translate materials but also to write Anabaptist materials in their own language.

Newspaper

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What MRS can teach us about PK

Every so often, along comes a new movement that ties the church into knots. The latest with this potential appears to be a Christian part of the men's movement known as Promise Keepers (PK).

As Ron and Arbutus Sider outline in this issue (see page 8), Promise Keepers is bringing together thousands of men in huge rallies across North America. A growing number are Mennonite men—many of whom report spiritual renewal and redetermination to fulfill their promises as husbands and fathers. Indeed, their enthusiasm has led one Mennonite group to change the date of a meeting of its leaders so that they can attend a Promise Keepers' clergy conference in Atlanta, Ga., this month.

Not everyone is as enthusiastic. As the Siders note, some women question the rhetoric coming from PK leaders that seems to bless a hierarchical view of relationships based on gender. And one woman wondered to me recently why the church gets so enthusiastic when men get together but greets similar moves by women with suspicion and hostility.

For whatever reason, Promise Keepers seems to be one of those movements on which everyone has an opinion—and about which there is no middle ground. When it came into existence a few years back, I got letters urging me to attend and report on the great things that were happening. The same mail brought notes begging for a critique of a movement writers saw men flocking to uncritically.

This is not the first time that the church has experienced new movements such as this. One of the more significant of the past 25 years has been the renewed emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, which eventually resulted in Mennonite Renewal Services (MRS) and similar organizations. MRS was started in the 1970s to encourage conferences and congregations to incorporate new expressions of the Holy Spirit into their life and work.

MRS also disbanded last December—not because it wasn't a success but because it was. In announcing their decision, MRS leaders noted that the Mennonite church has incorporated many of its concerns into its regular life. There is no need for a separate organization.

What can we learn from the history of MRS among us?

We can start by recognizing that an all-or-nothing response to groups like MRS and PK gets us nowhere. It may be difficult to remember now, but when the charismatic movement first started, feelings ran high. In many communities you were either for it—which meant attending meetings and rallies and often called into question more traditional approaches to God. Or you were against it—which meant sitting tight while congregations split or members migrated elsewhere or just quietly left the church forever.

Today we wonder why all the fuss. Thanks to sensitive leadership on both sides, MRS can disband with a sense of a task completed. And we all are more aware of the many ways that God's Spirit can work among us.

We can also learn that every movement has its strengths—and its weaknesses. The Mennonite renewal movement changed many lives. It not only brought but also kept people in the kingdom. At the same time, there were excesses—which MRS leaders acknowledged and apologized for publicly when meeting with the Mennonite Church General Board some months back.

We must learn to see the good in movements such as MRS and PK. The Siders outline what some of these are for Promise Keepers: the call to responsible fathering; the emphasis on personal conversion; the seriousness about racial reconciliation.

At the same time we must be willing to name and talk about the weaknesses. We must take seriously the fact that some of the actions and language of groups like Promise Keepers can leave women confused and wondering about the direction of the church.

But, as usual, it is Jesus who must have the last word. In his Gospel, Mark tells the story of how the disciples came to Jesus upset that someone not of their group was casting out demons in his name.

"Whoever is not against us is for us," Jesus replied. Besides, "no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me" (Mark 9:39-40, NRSV).

That's a good word about any human endeavor for the sake of the kingdom. Be it MRS. PK. Or even the church.—*jlp*

February 13, 1996

"I cannot explain what happened. But I can testify that I know in my inmost being God's ever-present love is true, I have been touched by the grace of God, and I sense a joy welling up I have not known before."

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

LIBRARY FEB 14 '96

How my God has met me (1):

Being born again is possible, even for a stodgy, middle-aged seminary professor

***Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." . . . Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"* (John 3:3, 9-10).**

by Ted Koontz

Are you a teacher of seminarians and yet you do not understand these things?" It's embarrassing that my honest answer must be yes.

In fact, for years I often smirked (only inwardly, I hope) with superiority when I heard talk about being born again. I was too sophisticated for that. But it happened to me—as a middle-aged seminary professor.

I had long been a Christian. Yet in my Christian walk, there was a nagging question—is all this "God business" whistling in the dark? Another question pressed in on my life as the years went by—is this all there is to life, to Christianity? And there was a weightiness about my discipleship that made it more of a burden than a joy.

My new birth came after years of studying nuclear war and after delaying parenting for a decade, partly because it seemed unfair to bring children into this mess of a world. It came after living among the poor in the Philippines; after walking with my father through an excruciating, losing battle with cancer; and after all the other pains that come into a 45-

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Roman J. Miller:
Facing tough questions about the beginning of life 8

Ministerial offices hope to be integrated by 1997 11

'How could it go so wrong?'
Genocide in Burundi continues 12

I had long been a Christian. Yet those nagging questions persisted. And there was a weightiness about discipleship that made it more a burden than a joy.

year-old life. It came at a conference on stopping male violence against women in Colorado in February 1992—a conference I desperately did not want to attend.

I wrote in my journal the first morning in Colorado, "You know, God, that I do not want to be here. Why didn't you send the snowstorm that I joyfully heard about on the radio yesterday morning?"

I knew that I, as a white male, would be blamed for another of the world's ills—this time violence against women. I simply didn't want to hear it again, though I had believed it was true for 20 years.

Yes, men do dominate and violate women in personal and systemic ways, and it ought to be stopped, I felt. But why are they picking on me, bringing me here to beat up on me? I'm different.

I trotted out my reasons to boast, like Saint Paul did. I wasn't macho—I'm shorter than Gayle, my wife, and less personally assertive than she is. I lectured already in 1975 about the evils of "maleness" as defined in our society—especially its violence that is often directed against women. I encouraged Gayle to do seminary and doctoral work when she had doubts about her ability to do so. I was the staff person who facilitated the creation of the Task Force on Women for Mennonite Central Committee.

Largely because of Gayle's job and against the advice of my professors, I left graduate school to move to Goshen (Ind.) College. I supported efforts to look first for qualified women, not men, when filling positions at the seminary. I accepted Gayle's becoming dean of the seminary where I teach and becoming not only my equal but my boss. Naturally, this is a rather self-serving summary of my history on these issues. But it reflects how defensive I felt as I went to Colorado.

Yet I knew, when I was honest with myself, that there was work for me to do in Colorado. My work especially had to do with my anger, an anger expressed most often to those closest to me—Gayle and our children. I did not like who I was becoming—an angry, bitter, hateful, and lonely person destructive of those near me. My anger was rooted in festering wounds. I felt powerless to heal myself, to lift the weight. So I longed and prayed for a miracle, though I did not really expect one. I felt weighed down by the cares of the broader world and by my own inability to make even my small part of it right.

My journal entry that first day continued, "Since you didn't send the snow, God, I take it that you want me here. I will be overwhelmed these days—I know I need your presence. I trust you will make this a good time. When opportunities for growth come, let me seize them. Hold me this day."

The days that followed were hard but good. We discussed lamenting as modeled in the Psalms by owning our hurts, pouring out our venom, and confessing our pain. We had conversations in which I learned firsthand of the sexual abuse some Mennonite women have suffered at the hands of some Mennonite men. I sat in a circle with 12 men, listening to their confessions of their worst incidents of violence against women and their patterns of abusive behavior.

And I confessed there the worst incident I remembered: yelling fiercely at Gayle and the children one evening in the car on the way home from—of all places—the seminary. I acknowledged my times of silence, coldness, and flashes of anger which made my family wary and perhaps even afraid of me.

In that circle I was not allowed to explain and therefore justify this abusive behavior but was forced simply to state it. I said what I had known in my dislike of myself but had never confessed: "I abuse those closest to me." Con-

Beginning a new series:

How my God has met me

"Encourage one another and build up each other," Paul tells the early Christians in his letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 5:11). One way to do this is tell our stories of God's love and grace in our lives to each other.

This issue *Gospel Herald* begins a series that attempts to do just that. We've titled the series "How My God Has Met Me," asking writers from across the church to share personal stories of God's work in their lives. The articles will appear in every other issue for the next several months.

Our hope is that the series will not only strengthen faith and commitment but also make us more sensitive to those times in which we experience God's touch of love and grace in our walk as disciples.—*Editor*

fessing my sins concretely and to others, hearing others confess, being cared for through it—this was revealing, empowering, freeing, and an experience of grace.

For me an even deeper experience of grace came through lamenting my hurt and pain. Moving beyond my anger required this grieving and forgiving of those who I felt had caused it. I had known I needed to forgive, of course, and had tried many times to do it.

Four things were different in Colorado. First, I had been praying in my hoping-against-hope way about these matters intentionally for more than a year. I was prepared.

Second, strangely perhaps, I came to identify with the stories of women I heard in Colorado. By doing so I accepted myself as a victim in need of healing as well as a victimizer in need of repentance.

Third, when I could no longer bear its weight, I poured out to a friend my pain, my inability to fix things, my desire to be transformed, and my helplessness in transforming myself.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, I confessed my woundedness and inability to heal myself or really forgive. Yes, I told of things which had hurt me. But I told the stories in a different way. I had always connected my sinful anger with my having been hurt. By doing so I had subtly justified or excused my behavior. Now I saw my sinfulness more sharply. So this time—though I was not conscious of it then—instead of blaming others, I simply lamented the pain.

In retrospect, I see that a double confession was necessary for my transformation: confession of my sin (not explaining or misnaming or minimizing it) and confession of my woundedness (not blaming others for their sinfulness in hurting me). And I discovered that confession had to be made specifically and to others.

Another important contribution to my new birth occurred in worship the last night of the conference. The women facilitators asked the men to write down one thing we were willing to give up to help stop violence against women. We were then to throw what we had written into a garbage can at the center of the room. At first I had no idea what to write, but then out of the blue it came with perfect clarity. It was something I knew would be costly and painful—though I had no idea then how costly. But I did it, and it was right.

The author, Ted Koontz, teaches ethics and peace studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

I woke early the last morning in Colorado with deep fear grasping me. I realized I was visualizing being severely beaten because of the decision I had made the night before. But I also realized that my commitment to do it was not shaken by the fear. Gradually I found the fear receding—and I found my many burdens being lifted. I began to feel a bubbling, bursting-forth joy that simply overflowed.

I went to look in a mirror to check if it was really true. It was. I saw myself smiling joyfully, broadly, happily (not happy-sadly) for the first time in years. A friend immediately saw it in my face. That morning I felt a new love welling up in me—a new love of Gayle, our children, myself, and God. It was a joyful, resurrection love—not the committed, heavy, sad love of the cross I knew well. I felt powerful and good.

I knew for the first time with absolute certainty that God is gracious, powerful, and able to make things new. I knew that the weight of pain and anger I had carried was lifted. I knew I would be less angry, less impatient, and less abusive when I returned to my family. I knew I had forgiven, I knew I was

That morning I felt a new love welling up within me. It was joyful, resurrected love—not the committed, heavy, sad love of the cross I knew so well.

forgiven, and I knew I had experienced a new birth—indeed, a "new creation."

This was the miracle I had been praying for, yet not daring to expect. There wasn't time that morning to talk with the person to whom I had confessed my pain the day before except to say, "This is Easter Sunday for me. It's the morning I've met the risen Christ." I learned that being born again is possible, even for a stodgy—but in some ways worldly-wise—middle-aged seminary professor.

I have learned something else since Colorado—that I need to be converted again and again. God did not finish with me that one morning. This is clear to me in many areas, and I suppose the areas where I need it most I may not yet notice. I see my need for conversion in my criticism of things that are less than perfect, especially in the church and its institutions. I am so quick to see and to say what is wrong! If anything, this fault, this sin, has grown worse since my "conversion." I now know things can be different and right (that is, the way I want them to be)—why aren't they? I know that this attitude, which often makes me speak a word of discouragement rather than encouragement, indicates that I need more conversion.

And though I have been better with my family, I need more converting there too, especially in relating to our children. Patterns of interaction do not change easily. Nothing has been more pervasive in my journal over the last years than reflections on being a father. Nothing seems like such a glorious opportunity, and nothing gives more joy. Yet there is nothing so truth-revealing, so humiliating, and nothing which reminds me so frequently that I am not finished. Yes, conversion is ongoing. I suppose it will take longer than I can possibly live for God to convert me!

Yet something transformative did happen to me in Colorado. My inner landscape is different. Perhaps I said just what is different most adequately only two days after returning from Colorado. I was to speak in a seminary chapel service on "A Testament of Hope," reflecting on Martin Luther King, Jr., using as my text Romans 8:18-39, in which Paul roots our hope in God's ever-present love. Before going to Colorado, I had been worried about whether I would be able to speak hopefully, especially after what I expected would be a terribly hard time at the conference. Instead I found myself speaking with a hopefulness I had never known before.

"I am here today to declare that these words of hope from Romans 8 are true. Of course, we have all believed that, and we all believe it now. Yet I say today that these words are true in a way I have never said it before. I have for many years believed these words. I have sought to live on the assumption of their truth.But I have not felt, known, that they are true deep in my being. My belief has been of the 'I believe, help thou my unbelief' kind. I have clung tenaciously, like a bulldog, to the belief that there are hope and goodness at the base of reality, even though my spirit often has not felt it.

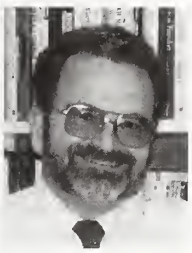
"I was convinced, in a way, of the truth of the gospel. I could never free myself from its grasp. But I was also a child of—a victim of—the Enlightenment as well as the best education modern America can offer. Yes, I have preached and taught what I believed—that God is love and God calls us to love others, that God forgives, that God sustains the weak, that there is finally hope and not despair. But when I preached such hopeful messages in the face of the world's suffering, I wept inwardly—and sometimes outwardly—at the beauty and power of this message and at the difficulty of feeling such hope at the center of my being.

"Mine was a tough, strong, 'wintry faith'—not untouched by the beauty of snowdrifted fields, but which clings to hope for life in the

(continued on page 10)

"I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him"—Deuteronomy 30:19b-20a

Gospel Herald



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READERS SAY

Carl Horning's ***And Just What Is It That You Do?*** (Dec. 19) struck a cord with me. I know that layoffs, down-sizings, and other forced changes can run a stress test on your faith.

The question I ask myself during these times is: "Does God really want me to be miserable?" My answer: "No."

Some people seem to sail through life without any major problems. Lots of us are not like that. We seem to encounter no end of battering. Is it possible that, when it comes to providing for our families and their well-being, we too easily get caught up in worries, only to lose faith? Can we peer through the dense dark, navigate by faith, and make it?

Robin Lowery
Wamego, Kan.

Thanks for producing an excellent set of articles on mission work in your January 9 issue. I read every word in them. You give a good feel for current mission efforts. I hope that before too many years the subject can be presented without first offering an apology for the term "missionary" itself, as Nancy Frey does. You pay proper tribute to the Shenks, who entered mission work in the 1950s, and thus acknowledge that the painful old stereotype belongs to an earlier time.

Anyone familiar with mission history will acknowledge the appropriateness of a critique of mission work as practiced many years ago. We've moved far from the assumptions and working styles of that era. The challenge to all of us is to communicate the integrity of current mission practices. Overall, your issue does it well.

Thomas Lehman
Chapel Hill, N. C.

In ***Is Overseas Mission a Thing of the Past?*** (Jan. 9), Scott Brubaker-Zehr asks: "Is Christianity the only true way to salvation?"

If we believe the Bible, there is only one answer: "yes." Salvation through Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved. To believe this is not being arrogant; it is being scriptural:

Jesus said, "I am the way. . . . No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12).

A person should line his beliefs with the Bible, not the other way around. We must live by the Bible, not by the reasoning of man. We must not set reason above God's inspired word.

John L. Ropp
Carlsbad, N.M.

Cyberspace Is Also God's Space (Jan. 2). Stuart Showalter's caveats regarding cyberspace cannot be overemphasized. Computers are tools—no more, no less.

I remain quite leery of the computer culture, and this article only raised more questions. How, exactly, does connecting to the Web "represent a sophisticated use of computers"? A Web site is nothing more than a new type of advertising. Should the church market itself as a consumer commodity?

Further, if pastors get their sermon ideas from the Internet, doesn't it follow that sermons will soon be directed only at the concerns of the minority of the households connected to the Internet? Will full involvement in the church be for all believers or only for the "digitally aware"?

I wonder what would happen if we saw computers and other high-tech appliances as evidences of human failure instead of as successes. We become dependent upon computers to the extent that we find ourselves incapable of performing certain tasks *except* by use of these machines. Computers thus constitute a loss, not a gain.

Insofar as computers help further God's realm, based as it is on God's physically intimate relationship with us through Jesus, they may be of some help. But to the degree that computers divide and separate us—into those who are on-line and those who aren't—they can only serve to divide and separate the church.

Michael Yeakey
Goshen, Ind.

A Wholesome Return to the Solider Type of Music (Jan. 16) reminded me of an incident that happened at a music conference at Goshen (Ind.) College in the late 1950s or 1960s. The subject of the conference was the use of musical instruments in the worship service. There was much debate with widely differing points of view.

At the end of one afternoon, H. S. Bender slipped into the back. Someone asked, "Is there any good reason why we cannot use musical instruments

effectively over an extended period of time without affecting our congregational singing?"

Bender stood up and said, "There are two answers. One, no, there is no good reason why we cannot. But, two, history tells us that we won't."

Herb Weaver
Scottdale, Pa.

I am able to enjoy singing traditional Christmas carols and hymns with my neighbors and the greater Christian community. But when I try to sing them with my own Mennonite church family from the new *Hymnal: A Worship Book,* it becomes a frustrating experience. The words of those songs have been changed!

Who among us is so bold as to change the classics that have been around for centuries? What disrespect for our forefathers! Whoops—mothers! Persons? There, now I've got it: "fore-persons"!

Let this generation create its own music. But let the classics alone. They have historical significance. Is anyone out there changing the writings of Edgar Allan Poe?

Donna Brubaker
Amity, Oreg.

Dear God, I Make Too Much' (Jan. 23). We commend you for continuing to struggle with the issue of wealth. And while we agree with letter-writer Herman Meyer in the same issue that the mere presence of wealth is not necessarily sin or evil, let us not jump to the conclusion that wealth is necessarily a blessing. Wealth can just as easily (or probably more easily) be a snare and a curse, causing us to forget our God.

We need to address two fundamental questions in regard to this issue:

1. What is a blessing? Many of us confuse blessings with rewards, thinking that if we are good Christians, God will bless us. But a simple cruise through the Scriptures or *Martyrs Mirror* should disabuse us of this notion. Besides, how presumptuous to think that we *deserve* a reward for only doing our duty!

Blessings are gifts given liberally by God—air, food, water, clothing, beauty, friendships, family, etc. They are not responses to our performance. The question is how we respond to God's blessings.

2. What is wealth for? How we respond to this question determines if wealth is a blessing or a curse. Do we build bigger barns, or do we use God's blessings to bless others? Do we hoard our treasure where moth and rust destroy, or do we invest it in the everlasting currency of the kingdom of heaven?

What is most troubling, though, is that we seem to find the demands of Jesus onerous. If we really understood the extravagant love that God lavishes on his children, the great debt God forgave us, would we then be struggling to justify how much we make or even worrying whether we make too much? Rather, wouldn't our hearts overflow with such gratitude and joy that we would respond with the extravagance of the prostitute who bathed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume?

Nina & Robbie Forsythe
New Wilmington, Pa.

J Denny Weaver's ***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** (Jan. 23) deserves a second and a third reading. "Jesus is the norm for ethics," we should develop a narrative theology, the image of our "ethnic glue," the fading usefulness of the "two lists" approach—all these are creative ways of helping us to move into the 21st century with a firm grasp on our Anabaptist uniqueness.

Arnold Cressman
Mt. Pleasant, Pa.

Which Way for Mennonite Theology? (Jan. 23). I "came home" to the Mennonite Church 15 years ago after being raised in another denomination. What attracted me to the Mennonite Church was the discipleship, service, and peace emphasis. But these issues are no longer discussed or taught in many local churches.

I have wanted to confront these issues in my own life, but I can find no one who mentors the membership in this direction. The simple lifestyle, if not forgotten all together, is at least frowned upon.

The Mennonite Church on all levels must confront questions such as these: (1) Who does the church want to serve? (2) How do we manifest that service in all aspects of our lives? (3) Do we have something unique to offer an increasingly violent and egocentric world?

I for one was happy to see these concerns put forth so well in this article. It is the most (only?) recent article I have seen which deals clearly with the recent trend of the Mennonite Church to blend in with its surroundings theologically.

Barbara Watts-Huebert
Montoursville, Pa.

Which Way for Mennonite Theology? (Jan. 23). The dichotomy J. Denny Weaver cuts between Mennonite theology built on core Christian doctrines and Mennonite theology rooted in Jesus as the norm for ethics is thought-provoking, to say the least. But I think the distinction between the two is overdrawn. Does Weaver really want to advocate that Mennonites discard classical orthodox teachings?

I am mystified by the apparent assumption that Mennonites have a corner on Jesus as the foundation for discipleship or that ecumenical and evangelistic impulses will erode it.There is far more that unites us with other Christian traditions than this article implies.

Mennonites can no longer afford to separate themselves self-righteously or self-protectively from the larger body of Christ. We have much to contribute to the mission of the church in the world. Let's share Jesus' story as the foundation for ethics and theology as good news. Let's do so with a winsomeness that avoids the whiff of Phariseeism permeating this article.

Mark R. Wenger
Waynesboro, Va.

It pains me greatly to disagree with certain statements that J. Denny Weaver made in ***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** (Jan. 23). I know that we share a passionate concern that Mennonites hold to and live out a Christian theology of peace and discipleship in the face of the many subtle pressures—no, temptations—that worldly success within North American culture presents us. We disagree somewhat on what the relationship of Mennonite theology should be to classical or orthodox Christian theology.

Weaver stated that formulas from the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon about the relationship of Jesus to God "provide nothing for discipleship." I beg to differ. By affirming that Jesus of

Nazareth is "fully" God or is "one being" with God the Father, the source of all life, these creeds ground Christian ethics in the very core of reality. No, they do not specify the content of Christian ethics—and were not meant to do so—but we can be grateful for what they nonetheless do.

To grasp what our Mennonite stake in these creeds is, we might imagine what we would now be debating if the other side had won at Nicaea and Chalcedon. The strongest rival to what became Christian orthodoxy was the Arian position. It concurred that the human Jesus was divine, the Son of God, and so on, but it stopped short of affirming that Jesus was fully God. Rather, for the Arians, Jesus was the first of all creatures.

Had this position become the orthodox one, Weaver might now be arguing against it—and with good reason. For the Arian understanding of Jesus would leave just enough of a gap between Jesus and the Father that we could not be sure whether the nonviolent love and character of Jesus fully expresses God's character.

But the Arians did not win. At Nicaea and Chalcedon, classical or orthodox Christianity actually left itself with the abiding requirement to wrestle with the earthly identity of Jesus and thus with his ministry, teachings, and example. It affirmed that the God who saves us is the God who has gone before us in living out the meaning of redeemed life, and who also (as God, the Holy Spirit) now empowers us to do so.

The creeds did not claim to settle every doctrinal and ethical issue for all time nor to replace the authority of the Bible. But they did set out ground rules for continuing the conversation about Jesus and all biblical teaching. And insofar as classical Christianity did settle some very key doctrinal issues, it left a solid foundation from which we as Mennonites can enter into the ongoing conversation and make a case for our deepest theological and ethical concerns.

To do that with a quiet self-confidence that neither cowers before majority interpretations of classical Christianity nor displays another kind of insecurity by insisting that we must on every point be distinctive or else lose our Mennonite identity is an approach to Mennonite theology that Weaver's polarity of only "two approaches to theology" would squeeze out.

Weaver's proposal is that we should prefer a narrative theology, and he is suspicious of theology that is obsessed with debating the "nature" and "being" of God. Fair enough. I myself am on record as calling for a more narrative approach to certain issues. The problem is that the biblical narrative itself raises "being" questions. Christian theology begins at a climax in the Gospel narratives when Jesus asks his disciples, "But who do you say that I am?"

In order to come to terms with Jesus, we continue answering that question the best we can in every generation, with words that are not the Bible but that attempt to guide our response to the Bible. This is systematic theology. Aiming to be biblical does not excuse us from its task. Fortunately, on this Weaver and I fully agree.

Gerald W. Schlabach
South Bend, Ind.

Churches Celebrate World Fellowship Day (Jan. 23) states that the Zurich baptisms of Manz, Blaurock, and Grebel took place on January 25, 1525.

According to a footnote on page 45 of Volume 1 of the *Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*, "January 21, 1525, is generally accepted as the date of this [Blaurock, etc.] baptism." Is this an error on your part, or does recent historical research dispute the January 21 baptism date?

Steven P. Miller
Goshen, Ind.

We're in error. According to An Introduction to Mennonite History *by C. J. Dyck, the correct date is January 21, 1525.—Editor*

Recently representatives of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church denominational boards flew to Oregon to meet with our district conference officers. I was disappointed to learn that the planned meetings were closed to pastors and lay persons who were not members of one of the district conference boards or committees.

The state of Oregon requires that all meetings, except those involving personnel issues, be open to the public. As an Oregonian I value this open meeting rule. Even though rarely do I have interest in spending time listening to general deliberations, it is good to know the option is available. It helps Oregonians to have trust in their government.

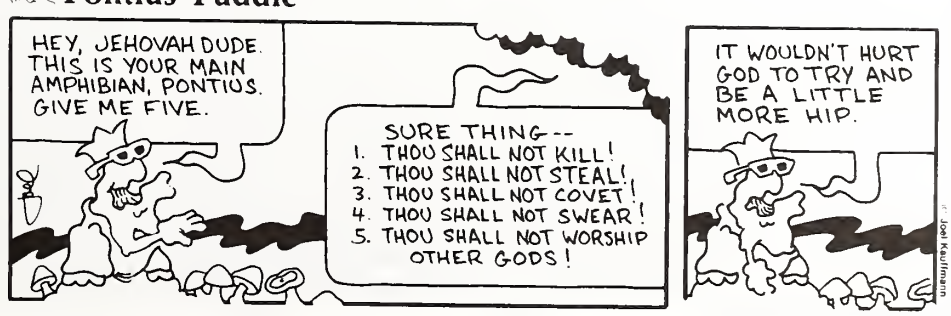
Perhaps it is because I value the Oregon tradition that I am jolted when the church functions otherwise. We live in a society of generic churches. My sense is that for many members there is less loyalty now to the Mennonite church and less understanding of denomination structures than in past decades.

I believe that staff of denominational agencies and district conference leadership should do everything possible to increase the flow of information. It is unfortunate that the opportunity for such exposure and information was not exercised when church agency staff came to Oregon.

Lois Kenagy
Albany, Ore.

Gospel Herald *welcomes letters in response to our contents or about issues currently facing the Mennonite church. Send letters to "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com.*

Pontius' Puddle



Facing tough questions about

We who are the spiritual offspring of the Anabaptists can bring to the bioethical arena principles that will help to solve dilemmas related to when life begins.

by Roman J. Miller

Rapid advances in biotechnology have given our society new capabilities in various areas of human reproduction. These capabilities have brought with them dilemmas regarding their use. Should an infertile couple attempt to use in vitro fertilization technology to conceive, or should they simply accept their situation as the plan of God? What about manipulating the molecules of our heredity through genetic engineering? Is it morally acceptable to replace a defective disease gene but immoral to replace a gene that may promote baldness? Does God implant a soul into a fertilized egg, making an abortion for any reason a mortal sin?

Questions abound. Since they reflect real-life human dilemmas, we need to address them. Are there answers? How does a Christian find guidance to deal with these issues?

As an educator, I began to read the popular and more technical literature in an attempt to form a consistent Christian perspective on the issues. I quickly found a lot of material written about abortion from Catholic, Reformed, Evangelical Protestant, and fundamental Christian positions. Less material was available on the topics of artificial insemination, genetic engineering, in vitro fertilization, and embryo transfer. With the exception of a few articles in church periodicals, I was surprised to find that little had been written in this area from an Anabaptist perspective.

Yet, as affirmers of life, Anabaptist theologians and ethicists have written and struggled with other life-oriented issues—war, capital punishment, death and dying, hunger, and poverty. Numerous books and pamphlets have been published about these topics; however, I could not find one entire book dealing with the issues at the beginning of life from an Anabaptist perspective. And I found only a few articles discussing abortion from an Anabaptist perspective in a couple of religious periodicals.

I believe that we, as spiritual offspring of the Anabaptists, can bring to the bioethical arena several principles that will help in solving dilemmas related to commencement-of-life issues. At least five ideas should permeate our understanding of bioethics and decision making.

The value of human life. Since we believe that all humanity bears the image of God, we have traditionally affirmed the value of human life to the extent that we would rather suffer and even offer our own lives than take the lives of others. When does this responsibility begin or end?

Biologically, human life does not begin at birth, during the third trimester of development, at the movement of implantation, or even with the event of conception; rather, life actually is a continuum. Living gametes—an egg and a sperm—from a living woman and a living man are combined at conception to bestow their life-transmitting qualities to a single living cell—the zygote. This zygote is not the beginning of a life but is a continuation of life. Contained within the genetic makeup of this cell are the blueprints needed to form and shape this unique individual. Since the genetic blueprints differ from one zygote to another, the precise unfolding and revelation is a bit different for each individual.

Following the day of conception—day one of development—this single-cell zygote in the oviduct rapidly divides, forming a ball of cells that makes its way into the uterus. Within the uterus, this unique cellular ball demonstrates, on the one hand, its *independence* of maternal tissues by burrowing its way through material epithelium that lines the uterus. These epithelial cells degenerate in response to the influences of the embryonic ball of cells, allowing the embryo to burrow its way down deep into the uterine lining of the mother.

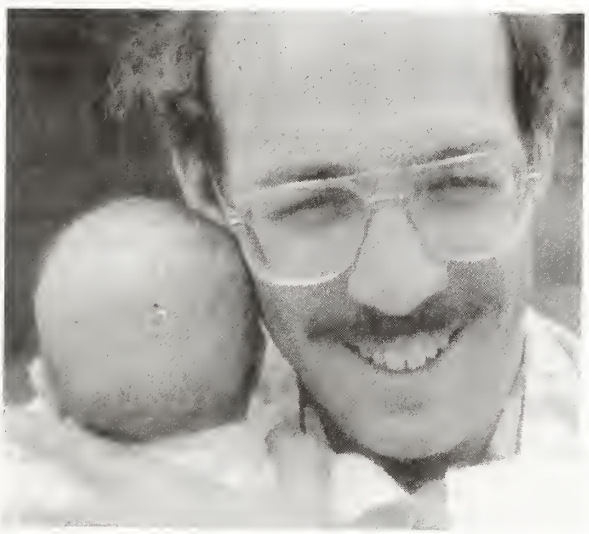
On the other hand, this cellular ball also demonstrates its *dependence* on the mother as the beginning stages of a placenta are quickly formed, providing the link between the embryo and the nutritional resources of the mother. Very quickly the implanted ball of cells develops into tissues and then into organ systems.

Thus, by the twenty-second day of development, the heart begins to beat; during the fourth and fifth weeks, brain regions are actively forming. Neuronal linkages are formed so well that by the age of seven weeks, a human embryo responds to touch by moving the neck and torso. By 12 weeks—the end of the first trimester—a human fetus can move arms and

legs independently. Without any doubt, abortions involving injections of salt or the tearing and dismemberment of the fetus do produce extensive pain before the "relief" of death.

The marvel of this biological picture is that it so clearly reflects the creative work of God in the unfolding of a unique individual. Unfortunately, while mortals can destroy any unique individual fetus, we can never replace it.

Our compassion for the weak and powerless. We have long attempted to follow Jesus' example in extending our helping hand to the weak, helpless, and powerless among us. The developing human fetus uniquely qualifies for this consideration. Although the unborn human child may exert its influence in numerous ways, such as affecting the moods and attitudes of the mother, it remains a very helpless individual. Its safety is assured by the Creator's design that provides a uterine habitation where individually it is continually unfolding and expressing itself in greater and greater degrees as time progresses. By choosing to affirm the value of this helpless unborn, the child becomes our neighbor in the biblical sense and a recipient of our care and protection.



The incarnation of Christ in the Christian community. We believe that the very character of Jesus is incarnated in the activity of the Christian community. As such, our homes and churches become microcosms of the kingdom of God. The challenge is that our attitudes and actions need to reflect Christ's character in welcoming the helpless among us. Just as expectant parents prepare the nursery for the birth of their child, so we in the larger Christian community celebrate this event with anticipatory baby showers.

That seems right to us, for we know both innately and from biblical stories about the unborn, that this very process of embryonic and fetal development is precious. As a Christian community, we dehumanize ourselves and act irresponsibly when we consent to allow these unborn lives to be snuffed out by abortion. Can inconvenience or embarrassment be more important to us than an unborn life?

The example of past Christians. We recognize the validity of the story of history and the fact that Christian experience in the past can provide lessons that are helpful in the present. Abortion is not a 20th-century phenomenon. Even in the time of the early Christian church, during the first century after Christ, abortion was a prevailing practice in secular and pagan society.

However, the early Christians distinguished themselves from their Roman and Jewish counterparts by affirming several things. They affirmed that husbands and wives were to love each other with equal fidelity; that enemies as well as the neighbors were worthy of agape love; that slaves and masters were to be received as equals; and that parental love was to be extended not only to the orphan but also to the unborn and newly-born. In numerous writings, early Christians verbalized their opposition to abortion and infanticide, both common practices of their society.

The enabling grace of Jesus. In the difficult cases of human development, let us claim the enabling grace of Jesus. When I was a young boy growing up in a Mennonite farm home in Iowa, a large brown book, *The Martyrs Mirror*, occupied a rather prominent place in the bookcase of our living room. This was not a frequently-read book, but occasionally my father or mother would read or tell a story from it. The stories were rather gruesome in their descriptions of individuals suffering torturous deaths because of their commitment to Jesus. As a young boy, I wondered about those stories and could not understand how the people in them could endure the intense pain induced by their torturers. Did they simply have strong wills? Were they superhumans? Or were descriptions of the tortures exaggerated?

My father, while discussing martyr suffering with a friend, once remarked that God gave them "suffering grace" to enable them to endure the pain and remain steadfast in their commitment to Christ. He meant that suffering grace

(continued on page 10)

Facing tough questions about the beginning of life

(continued from page 9)

enables a Christian to endure hardship. In his understanding, grace was not a theological term simply describing a positional relationship of the believer before a just and holy God; rather, grace had substance.

The apostle Paul describes a suffering that involved a "thorn in the flesh." (2 Cor. 12:7-10). A common interpretation suggests this thorn involved some type of physical ailment or suffering. Three times Paul pleaded with the Lord to remove the thorn. Three times the answer to that prayer was "no." Finally, the Lord spoke to Paul and said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." In a comprehending, faith-initiated response, Paul proclaims, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

That is the believer's faith response to the problem of suffering. "Because I do not understand your ways, Lord, I may ask, 'Why me? Why this?' Nevertheless I accept this difficulty and trust in your grace to enable me to live joyfully through the experience!"

One way individuals can experience the grace of Christ is through the people of Christ, as we bear one another's burdens and minister to each other as priests. As recipients of the grace of Christ, the Christian community becomes the vessel through which that virtue existentially flows into the life of the individual sufferer. Practically, the pain of the sufferer becomes the hurt of the community.

Thus when a young single teenager becomes pregnant, the Christian community dare not simply respond by saying, "That is your problem; bear the penalty of your own sin." Unfortunately, the results of that attitude have led either to scores of secret abortions or to mothers carrying the stigma of the "scarlet letter" for the rest of their lives.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Where in the Christian community is there healing and forgiveness? Is not the proper response of the Christian community to demonstrate mutual love and forgiveness? Are not these acts and attitudes of love and mercy the distinguishing marks of a people conformed to Christ's image? That teenager's problem must become our problem. In response we provide an environment of love and nurture that enhances the development and growth of the new child and mother. Is not this the Jesus way? Is not this a demonstration of the grace of Christ?

Roman J. Miller is associate professor of biology and premed adviser at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. He is a member of Dayton Mennonite Church. This article first appeared in Missionary Light, *a publication of Virginia Mennonite Conference.*

Being born again is possible, even for a middle-aged seminary professor

(continued from page 4)

way a barren tree clings to life as it bends before winter wind, waiting for the newness of spring.

"I may shed tears today also, but if I do, they will be tears of joy. I cannot explain what happened. But I can testify that I know in my inmost being that these words from Romans are true, that I have been touched by the grace of God, that I sense a joy welling up which I have not known before. I am sure that I will not always feel the joy, hope, and grace that I experience today. But I believe that I will never be able to forget the sense of springtime which I know today. When the winter winds blow again, as they shall, I will know deep inside that winter is not the only reality. Spring is not a mirage—always hoped for and always ahead but never experienced or touched. It is a reality, as real as winter."

As I write, winter winds are blowing again. A year-and-a-half ago Gayle and I held her father and sang "Gott ist die Liebe" ("For God So Loved Us") to him as he died in our home, his home. And a year ago our seminary president, and perhaps our closest co-worker, died suddenly. Both our predictable work world and our dear friend were gone without even the possibility of a goodbye. I do not live always in springtime. And recently Gayle's mother died in our home, her home. Our day-to-day lives, our family landscape . . . strangely unfamiliar . . . an empty room. I do not always live in springtime.

This article appears as a chapter in Godward: Personal Stories of Grace, *a 1996 book of spiritual pilgrimage stories by Mennonite leaders, edited by Ted Koontz. It is reprinted here by permission of the publisher, Herald Press.* *All rights reserved.*

With 'no one having the desire to carve out their own turf,' ministerial staff hope to be integrated by February 1997

Newton, Kan. (GCMC-MC)—More than anything else, when all was said and done, it came down to the strength of personal relationships.

That's how Dale Stoltzfus assessed the outcome of a Jan. 12-13 meeting in Chicago in which action was taken to recommend that the ministerial offices of the Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) operate under an integrated structure as early as February 1997.

Stoltzfus, minister of congregational leadership for Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries (MBCM), says, "We made a decision in much less time than we had anticipated because the trust level was high. Over the last number of years, the staff have developed close relationships. No one had the desire to carve out their own turf."

John Esau, GC director of ministerial leadership services, agrees. "When the discussion moved from forming an integrated committee on the ministry to include the joining of staff and services, we were ready to move," he says.

"We have multiple dually affiliated congregations and several dually-affiliated conferences. If we had decided not to make this move to respond with a single voice, we would not be serving them as effectively as we should," Esau adds.

Technically speaking, the recommendation comes from the GC Committee on Ministry, together with MC and GC ministerial staff. It is the first proposal to recommend change within the denominational structures after the vote in favor of integrating the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church at Wichita '95.

However, the action needs approval from the GC General Board and the MBCM board in March before the next steps are taken.

According to Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower, member of the GC Committee on the Ministry and conference minister for the dually affiliated Pacific Southwest Conference, "there is no questioning that this is absolutely the right decision. The staff have been working together so closely—this simply will formalize what has already been established on a more informal level."

The annual MC-GC conference ministers meeting has a history of cooperation. The group has met together for over 10 years. In December of last year, the conference ministers expressed their support for an integrated structure.

Ruth-Heffelbower points out that an integrated structure will help make things more efficient since there currently are areas of overlap. She says that many pastoral candidates ask to have their names put on both the MC and GC list. In the Pacific Southwest, she adds, the pastor's church of origin is not given much attention.

The recommendation also asks for the formation of an integrated reference council.—*Carla Reimer*

Vision: Healing and Hope committee sets goals

Newton, Kan. (GCMC-MC)—The *Vision: Healing and Hope* committee met for the first time Jan. 18 to look at how to encourage churches to take ownership of the vision statement adopted by Wichita '95 delegates this past summer.

The statement calls Mennonite congregations in the next 10 years to focus on growing "as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world."

"The vision statement is a contemporary articulation of what it means to be Mennonite. It emphasizes core values and yet, at the same time, is a forward-looking document," says Tym Elias, committee member and executive secretary for the Resources Commission of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

The *Vision: Healing and Hope* committee members brainstormed about several ways they could help churches and area conferences focus on the statement. Their ideas included the following: (1) reprinting the *Vision: Healing and Hope* resource, (2) affirming the commitment of the GC Commission on Education to publish three electives related to the vision, (3) encouraging churches to choose one Sunday each year to focus on the statement, (4) inviting pastors to submit sermon outlines and other worship resources about healing and hope, and (5) asking institutional staff and board members to be available to speak on the vision and to spend time in prayer.

—*Carla Reimer*

Former missions nurse dies. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Marian Newswanger, a nurse who had just completed a five-year term with Eastern Mennonite Missions, died Jan. 27 after a short illness. She is pictured here singing along with Maasai women in the Ogwedhi-Sigawa congregation worshiping in a mud building at a police camp in western Kenya. Marian and her husband Wesley worked in community development. They served with EMM in New York City from 1961-63 and from 1967-74 assisted in planting the Good Shepherd Mennonite Church in New York City. Before going to Kenya, Newswanger worked at a family heath center and hospital in Lancaster.

MCC peace presence in Burundi continues alongside 'creeping genocide'

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Up to 1,000 people a month are being killed as Burundi's civil conflict intensifies. Observers have called the situation "creeping genocide," reports Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Africa administrator Eric Olfert, who visited Burundi in December.

Fighting has increased around the capital of Bujumbura. The army, dominated by the Tutsi ethnic group, has forced virtually all Hutus out of the capital, which is under siege by Hutu rebels. Rebels have blown up power lines to the capital, which had no water or electricity for several months, resulting in a small cholera outbreak. The army continues small probes into the countryside, sweeping the hills and killing all whom they find there in retaliation for rebel militia attacks. Reportedly the majority of deaths are civilians.

MCC has had peace-presence teams in Burundi for a year. Both the army and rebels have avoided violence when expatriate observers are present. Olfert believes the presence of MCC teams has saved dozens, possibly hundreds, of lives. MCC peace-presence team members peaked at seven and are now down to three—Susan Seitz, Keith Miller, and John Gray.

A violent incident on Dec. 13 called into question the safety of foreign nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers in Burundi. Grenades were thrown into the yards of four NGOs in Gitega—the Red Cross, Oxfam, a French NGO, and a Spanish NGO. Though responsibility for the incident is not clear, observers speculate the military was involved. If true, the attack may mean the Tutsi military sees expatriate support for democracy and justice as a threat to Tutsi dominance.

Creating temporary peace. While the incident might suggest MCC should withdraw workers for their safety, Seitz believes the agency should increase team members to at least 20, deployed in two-person teams throughout the country. The temporary local peace created by expatriate presence allows space for local Hutus and Tutsis to form peace committees, which she believes can help stabilize the situation when expatriates leave. A reported incident in which an army member of a local peace committee stopped army killing in his region seems to support this view.

MCC will consider the future of Burundi peace teams at its annual meeting in February. Presently MCC is committed to a three-year program, which is half over.—*Ardell Stauffer*

'How could it go so wrong?'

Burundian Christians ask how to stop the killing

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—A particularly disturbing feature of the violence in Burundi, as in neighboring Rwanda, is the fact that 80 to 90 percent of both countries' citizens are Christians. How can Christians continue to kill each other in ethnic conflict?

According to a young leader in Burundi who is head of the country's Inter-Varsity movement, part of the answer lies in Burundi's history. Missionaries brought the gospel of salvation but only emphasized one's relation to God and not to others. The first generation of Christians were taught living a good Christian life meant marital fidelity, attending church, and avoiding alcohol.

"This is why we can be 90 percent Christian yet kill in the name of ethnicity," he says. He believes churches in Burundi need better education of church leaders and more Bible reading with an emphasis on the horizontal dimension of love and ethics.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Africa administrator Eric Olfert says fear is also a major factor in the continuing violence. Hutus fear the army while Tutsis are afraid of the majority Hutus. Four days following an incident in which 40 people were killed, Olfert spoke with a hospital employee whose mother, sister, and other family members had died. The man spoke of this tragedy matter-of-factly. "We had the impression he was repressing these emotions, bottling them in," says Olfert. "When that blows out, it could be ugly."

Connecting African churches. Olfert believes such repression of grief may contribute to genocide such as that which occurred in Rwanda. The Rwandan genocide has been a crisis for the African church, Olfert says. "Rwanda was a success story from the African church standpoint; its Western institutions worked well; it was largely Christian. How could it go so wrong?"

Olfert believes a possible future MCC role might be to help make connections between Rwandan or Burundian churches and other African churches that have suffered civil conflict.—*Ardell Stauffer*

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Residents of Vita House—Colin Rupley, Joe Tucker, and David Lind (left to right)—eat supper together. Rupley and Lind are seniors at Goshen (Ind.) College, and Tucker takes special education classes at Goshen High School. Vita House is an intentional community in which Goshen College students live with people with developmental disabilities.

Vita House offers Goshen College students chance to live with people with developmental disabilities

Goshen, Ind. (GC)—Vita House is a new small-group residence consisting of four students from Goshen College and two men from Merimna Homes, a community for people with developmental disabilities. The objective is to integrate disabled people like Joe Tucker, 19, and Matt Troyer, 20, into group homes where they can learn to live in mainstream society.

"Amie [Koontz] talked to me about it and said, 'Here's a house you should try.' I was scared, but it turned out good," says Tucker. Koontz is vice-president of Mennoheim, which sponsors Merimna Homes.

No college credit, but 'this is life.' The attempt to incorporate GC students into Vita House came from Koontz and Leroy Willems, president of Mennoheim and director of the Mennonite Disabilities Committee. In August, Ted Smith, Dave Lind, Brad Weirich, and Colin Rupley moved into Vita House, named for its position on the Vita athletic course east of campus. They knew they were getting a good deal on housing. They didn't know what the group dynamics would be or what impact the situation would have on their lives.

That impact has been profound, according to house members. "I think this relates more to our lives than any of our majors do," says Weirich.

Tucker and Troyer need a lot of time and attention from their housemates. Even the day-to-day activities of setting the table and washing the dishes can become emotionally draining endeavors. "We have problems, but we try to work them out like a family," says Tucker.

Tucker takes special education classes at Goshen High School, and Troyer is employed at the Association for the Disabled of Elkhart County.

"We have table talks where we sit down and decide what needs to be talked about," says Rupley. "We don't get [college] credit for it, but this is life."—*Ted Houser*

Cows with hypothermia and a caved-in barn roof meant a daylong rescue and cleanup effort for members of Hopewell Mennonite Church, Elverson, Pa. Over 70 people, many of them church members, showed up at daybreak on Jan. 13 to help the Truman and Virginia Hertzler family rescue cows trapped under rubble from a roof that collapsed under heavy snow. They attended to injured animals, lifted freezing cows into a "cow float" (a bovine hot tub of sorts), shoveled snow and debris, transported heifers to a neighbor's barn, and prepared food for the effort.

All but five of the cows were saved, and a new roof went up at the end of January. "Yes, the Lord does care for his animals," says Virginia Hertzler. "And for his children."—*submitted by Audrey Hanlon*

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Most churches don't receive 5,795 phone calls in one month. That's how many Waynesboro (Va.) Mennonite Church's Prayer and Inspiration Line (PAIL) logged in January. People in the community and church can call PAIL to hear a recorded prayer, inspirational meditation, special prayer requests, or information about the congregation. Pastor Stanlee Kauffman makes recordings every day that sometimes use three-way calling to share phone conversations he has with children, people in the hospital, or mission workers.

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Children are raising money for a baby with spina bifida in the North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo, Ind. Children in the primary department receive pledges for each page they read during January, February, and March in the church's "Read for a Need" program. The children are also selling "story grams" for a suggested $10 donation for the same cause. The story grams are books read aloud by children to people they visit, many of whom are unable to leave their homes because of illness or age.—*submitted by Diane Smith*

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Everybody thought it was a good idea, but nobody wanted to organize it—that was the story at East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church until three families formed a small group. The congregation was considering joining Interfaith Hospitality Network, a group of congregations that take turns housing homeless families in their church buildings a week at a time. Lots of people volunteered to help but no one to coordinate. Then Elizabeth and Wilbur Hershberger, Marilyn and Melvin Voran, and Cheryl and Dave Paulovich formed a "mission small group" to organize the project. Their first turn to house families comes this month. —*submitted by Bob Keener*

Tillers trains for farming in international settings

Kalamazoo, Mich.—Despite his law degree, Richard Roosenberg would rather share advice on how to use a draft animal than on how to draft a will.

Roosenberg is executive director of Tillers International, a Michigan-based organization committed to "share our rural heritage with the world," according to Roosenberg.

Mennonite Central Committee workers in developing countries have benefited from Tillers. This fall, the organization conducted its first in-country training: a five-week session in Uganda. Tillers employee Dave Kramer served in that country with MCC. The education Tillers provides has aided situations in Togo, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, among others.

Tillers started as a nature center in Kalamazoo, Mich., in 1981 and as a nonprofit organization in 1989. In 1995 it conducted classes at its 30-acre site for more than 150 people. The equivalent of 200 weeks of training were provided to people in the international arena.

A Ugandan participant in Tillers' first in-country workshop tests a cart built for carrying drums of water, made during the workshop. MCC Uganda helped pay fees for several participants.

"One of the most effective, low-cost technologies for much of the world is the use of animal power," Roosenberg says, adding that 400 million draft animals are still in use in the world. As a Peace Corps worker in West Africa, he helped modify equipment built for tractors to use with oxen. The wealth of information about equipment that was used in the past was not tapped. "We were worse off for having ignored it," he says.

Options rather than recipes. Rather than designing new equipment, Roosenberg would rather try the time-tested methods. A collection of 3,000 implements and tools at their Kalamazoo headquarters offers options ranging from planters to a dog-powered washing machine.

"We really look to providing options rather than recipes," says Roosenberg. Equipment from the collection can be used as prototypes for modern uses.

Expertise extends beyond handling animals. Tillers offers training in woodworking, blacksmithing, and rotational grazing methods.

Tillers has no formal affiliation with churches, but some in the Kalamazoo area have provided support. Mennonite Sue Stejskal has served as a volunteer and member of Tillers' board of directors since moving to the area.

Making an international impact. "It's allowed me to feel like I'm doing something," Stejskal says. "What little we do really does have an international impact."

Stejskal says she also values teaching the way of life to her 5-year-old son. "He thinks all kids have oxen to drive," she says, adding that she is thrilled that he can interact with international visitors.

All the work at the Kalamazoo farm is done with animal power. But Roosenberg warns that Americans shouldn't be quick to abandon tractors without forethought. "Don't expect an easy living if you're going to be behind an ox in the United States," he says.

Roosenberg prefers a life of finding practical solutions to agricultural problems. "There's a fair bit of reward in that," he says. "This is more exciting. Lawyers listen to a lot of sad stories."

Classes at Tillers International are open to anyone, particularly those working in international countries.

—*Marshall King*

Richard Roosenberg (third from left), director of Tillers, watches as participants drive the final spikes into a simple harrow designed and constructed during the workshop in Uganda.

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Mennonites to work in Chinese orphanage

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—In recent weeks, conditions at orphanages in China have attracted attention from Western human rights organizations and media, with reports of intentional starvation and "dying rooms" by a former employee and resident of an orphanage in Shanghai.

Last fall, China Educational Exchange (CEE) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) were invited to place workers at a new orphanage in Guangan, Sichuan Province. Two North Americans begin work there this summer.

This invitation came as a result of contacts CEE teachers have made. Teachers serving with this inter-Mennonite program have regularly visited orphanages in their cities to spend time with the children. Their involvement began after one teacher found an abandoned baby girl in the street. Several teachers have also urged their Chinese students to accompany them on their visits and to take interest in the children.

'Orphanage' is a misnomer. "The word 'orphanage' in this case is a misnomer," says Ann Martin, secretary of MCC's East Asia programs. "The majority of such Chinese institutions could more accurately be called 'foundling homes,' since most of the children living in them were abandoned and do in fact have parents. Most of the abandoned are female, sick, or have disabilities."

Ting Yenren is associate general secretary of the Amity Foundation, a social service agency founded by Chinese Christians. What the recent reports do not mention,Yenren says, is that "one of the basic problems with China's welfare work is insufficient government funding."

China's drive toward a more Western market economy has led to government cutbacks in almost all social services, says Myrrl Byler, CEE director. Orphanage workers are often poorly trained and fall into the lowest income brackets. CEE teachers who have regularly visited orphanages say staff are generally accepting of assistance when offered sensitively and with concern.

"I have heard that as many as 50 percent of children in some orphanages do die of malnutrition and lack of adequate care. However, the Amity Foundation says the deaths are not intentional and represent one of the reasons why we should work with orphanages," says Byler.—*Emily Will*

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Talking about the ups and downs of marriage and family. *Hesston, Kan. (HC)*—Students in the marriage and family class at Hesston College visit with Etta and Linford King after class during the final week of interterm. Pictured are (from left) Jill Miller, Shannon Miller, Linford and Etta King, and Travis Trotter. The Kings, on a three-month sabbatical from their health care and pastoring professions in Lancaster, Pa., spent the January interterm on the Hesston College campus. Linford served as a resource person for Howard Keim's church leadership classes, and the Kings both participated in discussions during Loren Swartzendruber's marriage and family classes, in addition to interviewing students for their family systems projects. The Kings are parents of Zach, a first-year aviation student at Hesston.

- **MBM receives grant.** A gift of $10,000 from the Kauffman Royalty Fund has been applied to the print and literature work of Mennonite Board of Missions media office in Harrisonburg, Va. Stanlee Kauffman recently made designations for his mother's estate, which she earmarked for literature evangelism. Christmas Carol Kauffman wrote numerous Christian novels in the 1950s and 60s. The money will support a new video about the relevance of Anabaptism today, a projected children's video on peacemaking, and further print outreach of the "Another Way" newspaper column.

- **Pritts named director.** Awanda Pritts of Scottdale, Pa., has been named director of human resources at Mennonite Publishing House in Scottdale. She comes to the position with the retirement of Nelson Waybill, who served 38 years as personnel director. Pritts holds a degree in social work and is a member of the Mennonite Church of Scottdale.

- **Goshen board meets.** The Goshen (Ind.) College board of directors recommended approval of a new major in computer science and applied mathematics and another new major in information systems to the Mennonite Board of Education. In the Jan. 26-27 meeting, the board also approved a plan to establish a Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center board of directors. Merry Lea is a 1,150 acre complex of fields, forest, bogs, and meadows that the college and community groups use for environmental education.

- **Peace teams planned.** Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) have announced plans for two 12-day teams to the Middle East (March 25-April 5) and Haiti (June 8-19). Applications for the West Bank trip are due March 1 and for the Haiti trip by May 1. Interested persons should contact CPT at 312 455-1199; e-mail: cpt@igc.apc.org.

- **Goshen choir tours east.** The Goshen (Ind.) College Chamber Choir will give programs in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Ohio, during a tour March 9-17. The 24-voice ensemble performs sacred and secular music from the Renaissance through the 20th century. Professor of music Doyle Preheim is the conductor.

- **Used hymnals wanted.** Salem Mennonite Church, Tofield, Alta., is looking for used copies of the *Mennonite Hymnal* in good condition. Call Jerry Boettger at 403 662-2735.

- **New appointments:**

Mike Ford, program director of Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa.

R. Wendell Sauder, associate director of development at Hesston (Kan.) College.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Lawrence Burkholder was ordained at Wideman Mennonite Church, Markham, Ont., by Doris Gascho on Jan. 7.

Owen Burkholder resigned as pastor at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., and began as conference minister of Virginia Mennonite Conference on Jan. 1.

Ed Stoltzfus was installed as interim pastor at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., by Phil Kniss on Jan. 21.

- **Missionary transitions:**

C. Paul and Hildi Amstutz, Mennonite Board of Missions workers in Paraguay, returned to the U.S. Jan. 3. Their address is c/o MBM, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370.

Izelma de Azevedo of Brazil left Oct. 30 for a term with Eastern Mennonite Missions in Hong Kong. Her address is Hong Kong Mennonite Center, 76 Waterloo Road, 1/F, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Bertha Beachey of Goshen, Ind., left for Kenya in November where she will serve three years as Eastern Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Central Committee representative for Somalia. Her address is MBEA, PO Box 14894, Nairboi, Kenya.

Nancy Frey, MBM mission intern in Benin, returned Dec. 9 to Canada. Her address is c/o Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999.

Carl and Vera Hansen of Harrisonburg, Va., left for Ethiopia on Jan. 2 for a 2 1/2 year term with Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Elaine Kauffman, MBM worker in Brazil, returned Jan. 16 to the U.S. Her address is c/o AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999.

Nancy and Robert Martin, MBM workers in Nazareth, Israel, returned to the U.S. Dec. 15. Their address until May 30 is 132 N. Ann St., Lancaster, PA 17602.

Sharon and Steve Norton of Goshen, Ind., left for Germany Oct. 12, where they will serve three years with EMM. Their address is c/o Herbert Hege, Tummelhaus 16, 88630 Pfullendorf, Germany.

Anne and John Scharman, with Chantelle, of Waterloo, Ont., left in October for a three-year Eastern Mennonite Missions term in Belize. Their address is P.O. Box 78, Belmopan, Belize.

Laura Schlabach, MBM worker in Mongolia, returned Jan. 14 to Mongolia. Her address is PO Box 49/532, Ulaanbaatar 210349, Mongolia.

Marcus Sollenburger of Dillsburg, Pa., left Nov. 21 for Brazil with EMM. His address is Caixa Postal 129, 78900-970 Porto Velho, RO Brazil.

• **Coming events:**

1996 MCC Central States annual meeting, Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan., Feb. 24. Speakers will share about their experiences in China, the Philippines, Yugoslavia, and New Orleans with the theme "MCC Kaleidoscope: Glimpses of the Global Family." More information available from 316 283-2720.

1996 Central Valley MEDA meeting, Fresno Pacific College (FPC), Fresno, Calif., March 16. Keynote speaker Richard Kriegbaum, president of FPC, will speak on "The Peopleside of Enterprise." Registration is available from 209 262-8030, ext. 5.

Fun Fest, Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind., March 22-23. Features an auction, kid's carnival, basketball tournament, pie-and-ice cream social, and pancake and sausage breakfast. More information available from 219 534-2567.

Harmonia Sacra singing, Arlington Church of the Brethren, March 31. More information from 703 549-4239.

Pastor's conference, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., May 8-9. "The Word Among Us: Teaching the Bible in the Congregation and Classroom" for pastors, faculty, and students, is sponsored by Goshen College. Information and registration are available from Sheldon Burkhalter, 219 535-7536, and are being sent to pastors.

Pastors of large congregations meetings, June 3-5 (Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa.) and June 10-12 (Crosswind Conference Center, Hesston, Kan.). Includes pastors of General Conference Mennonite and Mennonite Church congregations. Registration and information are available from Amigo Centre, 26455 Banker Road, Sturgis, MIT 49091; phone 616 651-2811.

• **New resources:**

"Stop the Violence," radio spots are available to churches looking to spread a message of peace and nonviolence in their communities. Eight spots deal with issues such as child and spouse abuse, anger control, gun violence, and name-calling. Produced for Mennonite Board of Missions by J. Ron Byler and written by Lowell Brown and Barbra Graber. More information and free copies of the spots are available from MBM at 800 999-3534.

• **Job openings:**

Administrative assistant, Mennonite Central Committee personnel services, Akron, Pa. Qualifications include training and experience in personal computer database management, word processing and spreadsheet programs; organizational, secretarial, and communications skills. Full-time, two-year position available May 1, 1996. Applications due April 1, 1996. Contact Goldie Kuhns, 21 South 12th St., PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

Director of Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa. Responsible to administer program, supervise staff, and manage budgets of the YES and VS programs. Full-time position begins May 13, 1996. Administrative experience required, along with vision for equipping youth and young adults for ministry. Bachelors degree preferred. Send résumé to Eastern Mennonite Missions, attn: Lamar Myers, PO Box 628, Salunga, PA 17538-0628; phone 717 898-2251.

Director of information services, Philhaven behavioral healthcare services, Mt. Gretna, Pa. Provides departmental leadership including strategic planning and some programming. Leadership ability and 3-5 years of information technology experience required. Knowledge of UNIX, ORACLE, Powerbuilder, or other 4 GL preferred. Send letter and résumé to Human Resources, Philhaven, PO Box 550, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064; fax 717 270-2455.

Faculty position in chemistry, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. One-year sabbatical replacement beginning fall 1996. Ph.D. preferred. Primary teaching responsibilities in organic and life science chemistry. Women and minorities encouraged to apply. Send letter and résumé by Feb. 29 to Lee Snyder, vice president and academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Faculty position in elementary education, Bluffton (Ohio) College. Qualifications include advanced degree in elementary education; graduate level teaching experience preferred. Responsibilities include teaching graduate and undergraduate education courses and placement and supervision of student teachers. Send letter and résumé or vita, three letters of recommendation, and transcripts (may be unofficial) to Amy Tabler, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., OH 45817-1196.

Faculty position in elementary and special education, Bluffton (Ohio) College. Qualifications include certification in elementary and special education, minimum of three years teaching experience, and graduate level teaching experience preferred. Responsibilities include teaching graduate and undergraduate education courses and placement and supervision of student teachers. Send letter and résumé or vita, three letters of recommendation, and transcripts (may be unofficial) to Amy Tabler, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196.

Housekeeping supervisor, Camp Luz, Orrville, Ohio. Responsibilities include weekly cleaning and supervision of summer housekeeping staff. Part-time or full-time. Contact Herb Lantz at 216 683-1246.

Manager, Selfhelp and thrift store, Iowa City, Iowa. Send résumé to Marilyn Hershberger, 1523 120th St., Wayland, IA 52654; phone 319 256-7851.

Staff positions, Bethany Birches Camp, Plymouth, Vt. Includes counselors, cook, assistant cook, assistant program director, lifeguard, nurse, maintenance leader, and kitchen and maintenance assistants. More information from Bethany Birches Camp, PO Box 145, Bridgewater Corners, VT 05035; phone 802 672-3488.

Staff positions, Camp Luz, Orrville, Ohio. Responsibilities may include housekeeping, maintenance, program, food service, and hospitality. Two-year voluntary service positions open September 1996. More information available from Herb Lantz at 216 683-1246.

• **Change of address:**

Albuquerque Mennonite Church, 2210 Silver, SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106.

NEW MEMBERS

Bloomingdale, Ont.: Alden Gibson, Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, and David Leis.

Iglesia Men de Botijas, Orocuvis, P.R.: Obed Bermúdez, Ramón Bermúdez, Jr., Reinaldo Bermúdez, Luzy Espada, Axel Franco, Alex González, Luis Joel González, Noel González, Hector Ortiz, Anita Rosado, and José Burgos.

Leetonia, Ohio: Max Peoples and Nancy Peoples.

Lititz, Pa.: Marlin Groff, Simeon and Jean Hurst, Barbara Mast, Deb Sell, Glenn and Florence Zeager, and Jeremy and Janelle Zimmerman.

Locust Grove, Burr Oak, Mich.: Roger and Linda Penrose, Rita Schwartz, Joel Lederman, and Holly Dumont.

Salem, Tofield, Alta.: Lorri Sitler.

St. Jacobs, Ont.: Elam Horst and Myrtle Horst.

Walnut Hill, Goshen, Ind.: Marla Kauffman and Janell Maust.

Walsenburg, Colo.: Brian Hanneken and Twila Hanneken.

Washington Community Fellowship, Washington, D.C.: Randy Brandt, Holly Hess, Dennis and Ruth Melkonian-Hoover, Susan Rudy, Karl Neumann, Deanna Shorey, Kurt Pluntke, and Mary Ann Zehr.

BIRTHS

Allebach, Linda L. Hockman and R. Brent, Harleysville, Pa., Casie Lynn (second child), Jan. 19.

Brubacher, Cynthia Hershberger and Mark, St. Jacobs, Ont., Sarah Nicole (first child), Jan. 14.

Clark, Linda Godshall and Danni, Newport News, Va., Theresa Amber (second child), Nov. 28.

Gingerich, Elizabeth Ingham and David, Ailsa Craig, Ont., Joshua David (first child), Jan. 10.

Hartzler, Staci Stuckey and Al, Pettisville, Ohio, Eliot Lynn (first child), Jan. 16.

Hildebrand Schlegel, Dianne Hildebrand and Harold Schlegel, St. Jacobs, Ont., Sophia Rose (first child), Nov. 23.

Holst, Margaret Wagler and Michael, Wellesley, Ont., Benjamin Michael (first child), Dec. 10.

Let All Within Us Praise!

A Symposium on Worship

Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas
May 2-4, 1996

Join us for this examination of the problems and possibilities of effective worship and worship planning through workshops and worship experiences for pastors, youth workers, musicians and worship planners.

Resource persons include:

Paul Westermeyer
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John Esau
Dorothy Nickel Friesen
Ron Guengerich
Keith Harder
Steve Jacoby
Marlene Kropf
Kenneth Nafziger
John Rempel
Patricia Shelly

Registration fee: $30

For more information contact Bethel College at 316-284-5281 or Dale Schrag at *drs@bethelks.edu.*

This symposium has been initiated and funded by the Fransen Family Mennonite Foundation, in cooperation with Bethel College, Faith & Life Press, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, South Central Conference and Western District Conference.

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Kichline, Karen Alderfer and Adam, Souderton, Pa., April Lynn (third child), Jan. 10.

Litwiller, Angie Miller and Brad, Colon, Mich., Cody John (first child), Jan. 20.

Metzger, Monica Huras and Tony, St. Jacobs, Ont., Alanna Nicole (second child), Jan. 10.

Metzger, Maida Hewton and Dale, St. Clements, Ont., Samantha Janice (second child), Dec. 1.

Meyers, Donna Gehman and Dennis, Telford, Pa., Ruby Lynn (second child), Dec. 28.

Moyer, Sheryl E. Detweiler and Geoffrey T., Telford, Pa., Adrianna Detweiler (first child), Jan. 18.

Pickard, Wendy Roth and Kevin, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, Bryton (first child), Aug. 4.

MARRIAGES

Cora-González: José Cora and Becky González, Bo. Pulguillas, Coamo, P.R. (Betania), Dec. 22, by Ramón Bermúdez.

Cripe-Yoder: Bryan Cripe, Goshen, Ind. (Christian Reformed), and Kathy Yoder, Middlebury, Ind. (Bonneyville), May 6, by Doug Slabach, Merlin Good (grandfather of the bride), and Ken Livengood.

Pluntke-Zehr: Kurt Pluntke, Arlington, Va. (Washington Community Fellowship), and Mary Ann Zehr, Arlington, Va. (Washington Community Fellowship), Dec. 30, by Dennis Hollinger.

DEATHS

Aust, George M., 80. Born: May 29, 1915, Goshen, Ind. Died: Dec. 15, 1995, Elkhart, Ind. Survivors—wife: Rose Schrock Aust; brothers: Charles, William H., John, Maxwell. Congregational membership: Bonneyville Mennonite Church. Funeral: Dec. 18, Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, by Ken Livengood. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

Beachy, Jonas Milton, 78, Glendive, Mont. Born: March 20, 1917, Plain City, Ohio, to Eli C. and Mary Ann Kauffman Beachy. Died: Jan. 16, 1996, Glendive, Mont. Survivors—wife: Katherine Kramer Beachy; children: Karen Ziegler, Ardyce Alberts, Lois, Rosemary, Ronald, Timothy, Mark; brothers and sisters: John, Noah, Alvin, Eli, Jr., Florence Hostetler, Betty Lyles, Anna Christner, Lena Yutzy; 11 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jonathan (stillborn son). Funeral: Jan. 20, White Chapel Mennonite Church, by Fred Kanagy, Glenn Williamson, and Arlie Rauch. Burial: Dawson County Cemetery.

He was ordained in 1951, pastored Mennonite churches in North Dakota and Montana for 29 years, and was conference minister of North Central Conference for 8 years.

Brubacher, Hettie Wideman, 83, St. Jacobs, Ont. Born: Dec. 12, 1912, to Noah and Lydia Wideman. Died: Dec. 26, 1995, St. Jacobs, Ont. Survivors—children: Glen, Lorene Snider, Elverne, Grace Rodriguez, Marvin, Adele Shearer; brothers: Henry and Emmanuel Wideman; 9 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Wilbert G. Brubacher (husband). Funeral and burial: Dec. 29, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, by Sue C. Steiner and Harold Hildebrand Schlegel.

Conrad, Edith S. Lehman Sprague, 84, Columbiana, Ohio. Born: Feb. 25, 1911, Washingtonville, Ohio, to Henry and Magdelena Sommers Lehman. Died: Jan. 18, 1996, Salem, Ohio, of congestive heart failure. Survivors—husband: Daniel D. Conrad; daughter: Mable Heinze; stepdaughter: Esther Rohrer; sister: Alta Weaver; 7 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Millard Sprague (first husband). Funeral: Jan. 22, Leetonia Mennonite Church, by Robert D. Yoder, Larry Rohrer, and Jerry Mead. Burial: Midway Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Curtis, Karen Sue, 17, Doylestown, Pa. Born: April 19, 1978, Doylestown, Pa., to Bruce and Alyce Chittick Curtis. Died: Jan. 15, 1996, Allentown, Pa., of injuries from an automobile accident. Survivors—parents; sisters: Kristen Marie, Pamela Beth; grandparents: John and Sara Chittick and Robert and LaVerna Curtis. Funeral and burial: Jan. 18, Doylestown Mennonite Church, by Duane Bishop.

Gingerich, Elmer, 67. Born: March 27, 1928, Milo, N.D., to Noah and Sarah Graber Gingerich. Died: Dec. 17, 1995, Sarasota, Fla., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Clara Miller Gingerich; children: Joan Grossman, Cheryle Kinsey, Larry, Ken; brothers and sisters: Raymond, Jake, Beulah

Cross, Esther Stutzman, Elnora Miller, Dorothy Fisher; 10 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Judy (daughter) and Keith (son). Congregational membership: Bonneyville Mennonite Church. Funeral: Dec. 21, First Mennonite Church, by Ken Livingood. Burial: Mottville Cemetery.

Mast, Francis Mardelle Verlod, 70, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Feb. 19, 1925, Grass Valley, Calif., to Frank and Delia Hodge Verlod. Died: Jan. 18, 1996, Iowa City, Iowa. Survivors—daughter: Sylvia Herschberger; stepchildren: Kenneth and Susan Mast; stepmother: Mildred Verlod; 3 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Randal "Bob" Mast (husband). Congregational membership: Kalona Mennonite Church. Funeral: Jan. 20, Peterseim Funeral Home, by David Groh. Burial: Sharon Hill Cemetery.

Nameth, Ira Irene Dixon, 86, Denver, Colo. Born: Aug. 15, 1909, Grand Ledge, Mich., to Claude and Maude Dixon. Died: Dec. 24, 1995, Denver, Colo., of a heart attack. Survivors—daughter: Virginia Stone; brothers and sister: Clyde, Robert, Richard, Ralph, Donald, and Arnold Dixon, Eva Corbin; 2 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Charles Nameth (husband). Funeral: Jan. 4, Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, by Mark Miller. Cremated.

Newcomer, Clarence Elwood, 85. Born: May 23, 1910, Columbia, Pa., to Ephriam and Stella Noll Newcomer. Died: Dec. 31, 1995, Portland, Ore., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Marie A. Harder Newcomer; children: Ann Marie Lillard, Dave E., James Donald; brother and sisters: Don, Catherine Hanour, Romona Hartman, Jean McCachren; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5, Portland Mennonite Church, by Ralph Lind. Burial: Lincoln Memorial Cemetery.

Raines, Jeannean D. Middaugh, 56, Huntertown, Ind. Born: Feb. 3, 1939, Allen County, Ind., to Clifford and Louise Richards Middaugh. Died: Dec. 26, 1995, Fort Wayne, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—husband: William E. Raines; daughters: Karen K. Reinoehl, Karla J. Staller; mother; sisters: Marcia L. Schweitzer, Carol E. Queen, Rhonda S. Listenberger; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29, First Mennonite Church, by Paul D. Leichty and Vernon Graham. Burial: Huntertown Cemetery.

Roes, David Vernon, 62, Milverton, Ont. Born: Jan. 25, 1933, Ellice Twp., Ont., to Eli and Nancy Nafziger Roes. Died: Dec. 29, 1995, Milverton, Ont., in a traffic accident. Survivors—wife: Mildred Herrfort Roes; children: Maxine Hundt, Randy, Kim Smith; brother and sisters: Alvin, Laura Kipfer, Emma Steckley, Esther Kropf; 6 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Byron Roes (son). Funeral and burial: Jan. 2, Riverdale Mennonite Church, by Glenn Zehr and Melvin Roes.

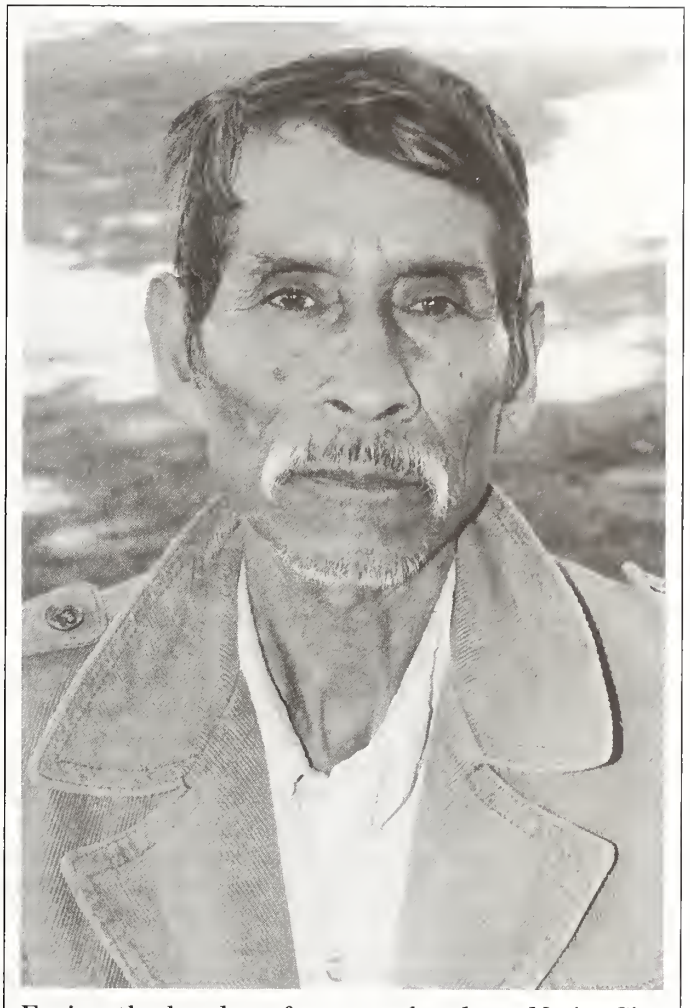
Roth, Calvin C., 66, West Point, Neb. Born: July 10, 1929, Chappell, Neb., to Calvin and Emma Boshart Roth. Died: Jan. 18, 1996, West Point, Neb., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Marilyn Perry Roth; children: Rick, Vicki Embrey, Sandy Doescher, Lori Hagedorn; brother and sisters: Floyd, Alice Ehrisman, Ina Wittrig, Viola Schantz, Adele Oswald, Edna Albus; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20, Beemer Mennonite Church, by Roger Hazen. Burial: Beemer Cemetery.

Saltzman, Myrtle Huber, 88, Tofield, Alta. Born: Sept. 3, 1907, Spring City, Pa., to Jacob and Bertha Good Huber. Died: Dec. 29, 1995, Tofield, Aita., of cancer. Survivors—stepchildren: Merlin Saltzman, Ferne Petersen, Mary Martin, Paul and Joseph Voegtlin, Ruth Yoder; brothers and sister: Henry, Milton, and Bertha Huber. Predeceased by: Jacob Saltzman (second husband) and Joseph Voegtlin (first husband). Funeral and burial: Jan. 2, Salem Mennonite Church, by Orvin Boettger and Merlin Stauffer.

Sturma, Christine Buncak, 79, Shipshewana, Ind. Born: Nov. 23, 1916, East Moline, Ill., to Martin and Anna Habarda Buncak. Died: Jan. 12, 1996, LaGrange, Ind. Survivors—children: Lillian Wasowicz, George, Kalman, Jr.; brother and sister: Martin Buncak, Sue Maeax; 8 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Kalman Sturma, Sr. (husband). Funeral and burial: Jan. 15, Shore Mennonite Church, by Carl Horner.

Trauger, Mary Rice, 91. Born: March 7, 1904, to Albert and Mary Myers Rice. Died: Dec. 12, 1995, Sellersville, Pa. Survivors—children: Esther Showalter, Ida, Loretta Gilmore, Raymond, Jr.; 5 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Raymond Trauger (husband). Funeral: Dec. 16, Rockhill Mennonite Church, by Michael Derstine. Burial: Deep Run Mennonite Church East Cemetery.

Turner, Kathryn Marie Yoder Shank, 82, Broadway, Va. Born: Nov. 29, 1913, Goshen, Ind., to O. Lloyd and Elsie Good Yoder. Died: Jan. 3, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—children: Jean S. Miller, Jerry E. Shank; sister: Leora G. Yoder; one grandchild. Predeceased by: Zach M. Turner (second husband) and David Paul Shank (first husband). Funeral: Jan. 6, Trissels Mennonite Church, by Paul G. Conrad and Lawrence M. Yoder. Burial: Zion Mennonite Church Cemetery.



Facing the burden of poverty head-on. *Mexico City, Mexico (MCC)*—Analysts expect that in Mexico alone some one to two million poor rural inhabitants, like this indigenous man in southern Mexico, will be displaced to overburdened cities or to the United States in search of work and survival due to the economic stress hitting Latin America. Octavio Diaz, member of Vida Nueva Mennonite Church in Mexico City, says that the economic situation is like "a chess player moving people around like pawns, as if they had no intentions of their own." Diaz, whose work in outreach is partially funded by Mennonite Central Committee, says his congregation gives 55 percent of their funds to help those in need.

Newspaper

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Who invited this guy named Robert?

Almost every Mennonite business meeting I've attended in the past two years has gotten hung up on procedure.

It happened most recently at a Virginia Mennonite Conference meeting when leaders brought a statement on church membership for military personnel (see story in Jan. 30 *Gospel Herald*). The plan was to have delegates affirm the direction of the document and send it on to congregations for discussion. But delegates wanted action. They presented a motion to adopt on top of a motion to affirm. For a half hour the assembly stalled as leaders consulted *Robert's Rules of Order.* At the end of the day, a listening committee deadpanned: "We got a bit hung up again on process."

Virginia isn't the only body to snag on *Robert's.* At Wichita '95, the entire Mennonite General Assembly ground to a halt when delegates tried to rescind a motion they had made a day earlier. Moderators and parliamentarians struggled to keep clear what motions were on the floor and which ones could be discussed.

Whence comes this new attention to parliamentary procedure? What are these *Robert's Rules of Order* we're consulting?

Henry M. Robert first published his rules for conducting meetings in 1876. Ironically, for Mennonites, Robert was a general in the U.S. Army when he did his work. He did so "to assist an assembly to accomplish in the best possible manner the work for which it was designed," as he writes in his preface.

That Robert did his job well should be evident by the fact that his book is still being used, after several revisions, in most North American democratic business gatherings, including those of the Mennonite church.

The good general did fall out of favor with us during the 1960s and '70s. Concerned that everyone had an equal say in church decisions, we adopted a consensus model. We talked and we talked until everyone agreed—or gave in—to a certain direction. More recently, aware that we can talk forever, we seem to be moving in favor of more structure.

So again we find ourself with *Robert's.* Today almost every major group doing church business has its parliamentarian—who has no cushy job. Every one of them I know has on occasion had to scramble, check the book, and try to apply it to the discussion at hand. There is also always a delegate who rises to dispute either interpretation or application (and we wonder why following the Bible is so difficult).

But even here Robert could help us. "It is necessary to restrain the individual somewhat, as the right of an individual, in any community, to do what he pleases, is incompatible with the interests of the whole," Robert writes.

The Bible tells us the same thing, if not in the same way. We who follow it know we must look out for the good of the community as much as for our own welfare. Yet how often we exert ourselves in the community's discussion, more concerned that we be heard than that the community progress toward its goals.

Robert also reminds us that no procedure for conducting the church's business is either right or wrong. He quotes from English parliamentary law: "Whether these forms be in all cases the most rational or not is really not of so great importance. It is much more material that there should be a rule to go by than what that rule is."

But we continue to tie ourselves into knots over procedure, often in the name of *Robert's Rules.* How easily we deceive ourselves into thinking we are doing kingdom work when our debate is really about process. In every meeting I've attended that stalled on process, both sides of the debate generally agreed on content but certainly not on procedure.

Perhaps it's time to pause and come to agreement on the basics. What is it we want to accomplish? What is the efficient, energy-saving, people-sensitive way to do it?

Robert and his rules are one way. In moderating the recent Virginia Conference sessions, Laban Peachey told how he had read *Robert's* and was impressed with its tidy organization. But he cautioned delegates about following these *Rules* slavishly. "That's the way the Gentiles do it," Peachey said.

As an alternative, found nowhere in Robert's pages, Virginia delegates spent five minutes praying together before their vote. That move relaxed the meeting. It also brought a decision that seemed a happy blend of vote and consensus.

Robert and his rules will likely continue life among us. They can be welcomed—as long as we keep them in their proper place.—*jlp*

February 20, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARIES ELKHART LIBRARY FEB 21 '96

Confronting sin in the congregation

We must commit ourselves to a vision of discipline that includes both grace and judgment, unconditional love and confrontation, humility and responsibility.

by Ryan Ahlgrim

One of the most difficult tasks I perform as a pastor is confronting persons in my congregation whose behavior is inappropriate or destructive. If I could avoid it, I would. But I can't always avoid it because I have a responsibility for the health of my congregation.

Confronting sin is the task of the congregation as well as the pastor, but how should a congregation carry out this task? Mennonites have struggled with this question endlessly. Our history is littered with mistakes and partial successes. Even Jesus seems to give us mixed signals on how to relate to people whose behavior is clearly wrong. On the one hand, Jesus eats with the prostitutes and tax collectors, shocking religious leaders by extending God's amazing grace. On the other hand, Jesus pinpoints sins and utters warnings that send chills up my spine. He says, "Judge not," (Matt. 7:1), but he also tells the church to exclude the unrepentant member (Matt. 18:17).

Faithfully integrating grace and judgment, unconditional love and confrontation, and humility and responsibility is perhaps beyond the ability of any congregation. Yet it is our

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Jim Bishop:
Lent: from introspection to life with new meaning 7

Ronda Suderman King:
Lent is a time to face our dying 8

***Gospel Herald* to merge into integrated publication 10**

Integrating mind and body:
Artists meet in Cincinnati 13

Mennonites are sensitive to the need for discipleship and accountabililty in a congregation's life. We are perhaps less sensitive to the need for moral humility.

God-given task to commit ourselves to such a vision. The following are four models for how congregations might confront sin among church attenders. Perhaps these models will illuminate some of the problems involved and clarify our vision.

1. Indirect confrontation. In this model, all who attend are welcomed and shown unconditional love by the congregation. All who make a Christian confession of faith can become members. Sin is ultimately defined by the individual, who applies this measure to self but does not confront others with the same measurement. Confronting sin and fostering ethical instruction is left to Sunday school discussions that address general situations and positions rather than specific people. The same is true for sermons, which are also general rather than specific.

Many mainline Protestant churches that wish to embody Jesus' emphasis on accepting the outcast and erasing self-righteous boundaries favor this approach. Unfortunately, this model often leads to a congregation without boldness, strong identity, or the ability to stand up to contrary cultural influences.

2. Direct confrontation. Using this model, the elders of the congregation formulate a clear consensus of what sins should be consistently confronted. They would inform anyone engaged in any of these sins who attends the church that such behavior is not approved by the church and that the person should refrain if he or she wants to continue attending. Membership is out of the question until these behaviors are stopped. Others in the church, seeing the elders' consensus, are emboldened to also confront each other on these sins and lead each other to confession, repentance, and conversion.

More conservative evangelical churches who wish to embody the ethical purity called for by Jesus seem to favor this approach. Unfortunately, this model often leads to legalism, self-righteousness, and subtle forms of hypocrisy.

3. Delayed confrontation. A congregation that uses this approach welcomes and shows unconditional love to all who attend. At the point at which membership is requested, the elders confront any sins they see that are serious in nature and inconsistent with a confession of faith. Membership is withheld until the person repents of these sins. Members continue to be mutually responsible not to engage in such sins and are confronted by each other as sins arise.

This approach operates in many Mennonite churches who are attempting to combine acceptance of "outsiders" with discipleship for members. Unfortunately, this model also has drawbacks. Attenders who claim to be Christians but who are not seeking membership are never directly confronted—regardless of what sins they may be engaged in. A second problem is that membership becomes dependent on ethical achievement, which gives the impression that God's salvation is something we accomplish rather than an undeserved gift we receive in humility.

4. Relational confrontation. In this model all who attend a congregation are welcomed and shown unconditional love. Members have a ministry of friendship and hospitality to nonmembers. Judgments are withheld until a relationship of trust and understanding has formed, after which the member patiently and kindly confronts the nonmember (and other members) concerning behaviors inconsistent with Christian faith. When done in a spirit of humility, such confronting becomes a two-way dialogue resulting in mutual guidance and growth. The pastor and elders make clear to the congregation the general (and sometimes specific) shape of ethical Christian living so that members can carry out this task of mutual accountability.

This approach perhaps comes closest to the ideal expressed in recent Mennonite theology. It combines grace, humility, and discipleship.

It can incorporate different approaches to membership requirements such as those suggested by the indirect or delayed models.

But even this model has its problems. It is complex, difficult to carry out, and demands the most from the congregation in terms of spiritual sensitivity, maturity, and boldness. It also cannot be carried out with complete con-

sistency. Each congregational member and relationship is unique, so the task of confronting sin will be carried out in unpredictable and uneven ways. The elders can provide guidance for the purpose of enhancing consistency, but they cannot impose it.

Despite these difficulties, I believe the relational model is the best one for congregations to pursue. Although it is complex and uneven in application, it is the only model that avoids the spiritual destruction of self-righteousness without letting go of the spiritual necessity of corporately responsible discipleship.

Mennonites are usually sensitive to the need for discipleship and accountability in the congregation's life. We are perhaps less sensitive to the need for moral humility. No, individual Mennonites do not go around boasting of their moral achievements. We frown on boasting. But we do sometimes judge other people's sins as far worse than our own, and therefore we avoid associating with such people and treating them as people equally loved by God. This is moral blindness and a failure to realize that in God's eyes we are all in the same boat. Jesus confronts many people in the Gospels but none so strongly as the self-righteous religious people.

Jesus' example for confronting sin is complex but not contradictory. First, Jesus loved sinners (which includes us), and he physically demonstrated that love by associating with them in enjoyable and socially intimate ways (Mark 2:15-17). Next, he spoke of God forgiving anyone who approaches God and others in humility (Luke 18:9-14). At the same time Jesus got to the root of what it means to be ethical (Matt. 22:34-40). Finally, Jesus directly confronted individual sin—but only after the confronters acknowledged their own sin and recognized the hypocrisy of their condemnations (John 8:2-11).

If we are to follow Jesus' example in the church, then our model for confronting sin will inevitably include the same complexities of grace followed by discipleship. It is in this way that we confront sin with humility.

Ryan Ahlgrim is pastor of First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, Ind. He previously served as pastor of Peoria-North Mennonite Church in Illinois. Ahlgrim began attending a Mennonite church 35 years ago when his non-Mennonite parents were welcomed by a congregation.

"For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' "
—2 Peter 1:17, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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I had to chuckle when I read in "Items & Comments" (Jan. 9) that the Vatican has declared that its stand against the ordination of women is infallible. What arrogant creatures we humans are! How could we ever think that our present dim understanding is perfect? The pope may have arrived at what he thinks is a faithful position, but as a human he should not be declaring that position final.

My chuckle turned a bit nervous when I recalled the recent statement of our own Council on Faith, Life and Strategy on the meaning of "dialogue" in the Purdue '87 statement on human sexuality, a document with approximately the same mix of human and divine authorship as John Paul II's 1994 letter on women priests.

CFLS says that "the words 'loving dialogue' found in this document should not be construed to mean that the homosexual issue is unresolved." When I clear up the double negative as best I can, this tells me that the issue is resolved!

How's that again? Closed and settled by decision of CFLS? Those are proud words, too close to the pope declaring himself infallible for me.

The sentence containing the words "loving dialogue" in the Purdue '87 "Call to Covenant" concludes with this phrase: ". . . that the Holy Spirit may lead us to further truth and repentance." Now there is a statement that acknowledges the position of humans writing about the divine! I commend these words to CFLS as an example of appropriate humility and openness to further work and leading of the Spirit.

Rich H. Meyer
Millersburg, Ind.

Our Father-Mother Who Art in Heaven (Oct. 3). There is a race that through the centuries have withstood slavery, massacres, constant discrimination, hatred, and secret campaigns to annihilate them from the face of the earth. Yet they survive and prosper and contribute to society tenfold.

There is another race that have endured the same thing but not always prospered or contributed to society, nor have they risen above the battle with strength and pride. Why?

Louis Farrakkan and his Million Men March know the answer. Promise Keepers know the answer. All these teach that *strong fathers, strong families make a strong race.*

So why are liberal Mennonite philosophers and theologians buying into the great deception of God as Father and Mother? Considering the upper echelon of intelligence of your readers and contributing writers, that *Gospel Herald* gives audience to such blatant irreverence to Father absolutely blows my "simple" mind.

Lois G. Bisbort
Alburtis, Pa.

I am intrigued by the defensive reactions to ***For Richer, for Poorer*** (Dec. 5). Upon rereading the article, I've concluded J. Daryl Byler takes a milder approach to the issue of wealth and poverty than does the New Testament.

Any mention of wealth in the latter is usually accompanied by dire warnings. Wealth in the kingdom is more a danger than an opportunity. Unfortunately, church institutions are currently dependent upon large contributions from the wealthy. This hinders an objective appraisal of what Jesus had to say about wealth.

Thus I applaud your editorial, ***('Dear God, I Make Too Much')*** (Jan. 23). The gap between the rich and the poor is widening. It would be tragic if the church follows suit without vigorously challenging this trend.

Abraham K. Gehman
Bally, Pa.

In her article, ***What Does Christmas Have to Do with Jesus?*** (Dec. 12), Susan Mark Landis writes that Jesus' parents were "not financially able to give the required offering of a dove in thanks for the birth of a son." I would like to see the basis for that statement from either Scripture or tradition.

When Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple after his birth, "they finished doing all that was required by the law of the Lord" (Luke 2:39). Luke also tells us Jesus' parents had enough financial resources to travel from

How can we keep from singing? (Jan. 16)

I have seen lots of changes in music in the Mennonite Church. When I was growing up, we had no musical instruments—nor any special music, such as quartets or choruses.

We now have a variety of options, especially with the new *Hymnal: A Worship Book.* I think this is great. We have made many improvements in our music.

We have a great heritage of music in our church. May we keep it while we are on this earth. For when we get to heaven, we will have even greater music.

Carroll Walter
Quakertown, Pa.

I've long had difficulty with prayer—how to do it and how to feel "prayed for." But for the past number of years, I have been writing and singing my own songs. They are the way I filter my experiences with people, places, and situations into something that goes beyond myself. Performing music, my own and others', alone or in groups, regardless of era or style, is the way I pray.

The more I listen to and develop my own voice, the more I become acutely aware of other voices. I believe the human voice is the most potentially expressive instrument there is. Everyone has one, and we can all play them, whether we think so or not.

Granted, good music doesn't happen without a bit of challenge. We need to pay attention to what we're doing when we sing. But it doesn't take an overwhelming amount of effort to sing well together, to have a sense of individual and group achievement, and to profoundly experience the divine.

The accessibility inherent in the human voice is very important. While we need the diversity that other instruments and instrumental music brings to our worship, and while we need to include people with varied musical interests and abilities as well as to styles of music of the times and cultures in which we live, sometimes we do so to the point of effectively "drowning ourselves out."

I hope that, as the song leader is amplified so as to be heard above the band and all its gear, we don't forget about the instrument we have at the ready all the time.

Douglas Witmer
Philadelphia, Pa.

Nazareth to Jerusalem every year for the Feast of the Passover.

There seems to be some competition among those who write to "afflict the comfortable" to see who can weave the bleakest details from biblical stories into their writings.

John M. Eby
Pennsville, N.J.

Which Way for Mennonite Theology? (Jan. 23). If you take away the biblical doctrines of nonresistance and discipleship, what do you have? Nothing!

To be a Christian is to love all peoples. No successful missionary ever used the sword. Never. And neither will we.

My years in Civilian Public Service taught me that to care for mental patients was serving my country just as meaningfully as men who went to war.

J. Denny Weaver is right. If rejection of violence, discipleship, and the normativity of Jesus are intrinsically part of the gospel, nonresistance and discipleship will shape the core of our theology.

Most people have been won to Christ by watching others who are at peace when everything else is falling apart.

Norman H. Teague
Linville, Va.

Which Way for Mennonite Theology? (Jan. 23). J. Denny Weaver is right in saying that Mennonite theology is not a matter of some added Mennonite "distinctives" attached to a core of basic doctrines on which we agree with traditional orthodoxy.

To illustrate: orthodoxy holds that the essential work of Christ was to be punished on the cross for the sins of the world. That view has always had trouble recognizing the significance of the public ministry of Jesus' and of the resurrection. John Calvin, when asked why the Apostle's Creed made no mention of the public ministry of Jesus, said, "Because it is not important for our salvation"!

For Mennonite theology, the essence of the work of Christ was to establish the reign of God. On that view the entire mission of Christ is important and makes eminent sense. (1) Jesus' public ministry taught what the kingdom of God is like and called people to it. (2) Jesus' death showed how a true King lays down his life for his people. (3) Jesus resurrection is God's vindication and enthronement of Jesus despite the people's rejection of him. It is now our privilege to live under the rule of God and of Christ, individually and together as the church.

When, therefore, Mennonites are true to their heritage, they make the lordship of Christ central to their faith. And that means a basically different configuration of the doctrine of the work of Christ than that historically held in traditional orthodoxy.

Marlin Jeschke
Berlin, Ohio

Which Way for Mennonite Theology? (Jan. 23). I agree with J. Denny Weaver that, as ethnic and cultural commonalities among Mennonites diminish, clear expression of theological beliefs is becoming increasingly important in articulating Mennonite identity. I also agree that Mennonite theologizing should begin from distinctives stressed in our tradition.

Weaver, however, argues that a sharp dichotomy exists between this way of doing theology and a second: building on a core of classic Christian doctrines, such as the full humanity and deity of Jesus Christ and the Trinity, as affirmed in the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds. He mentions only these two allegedly opposed paths: the uniquely Mennonite, which will undergird our "distinctive witness for peace and justice in the world"; and the "classical," which he claims will surrender it and reduce us to an entree on "the smorgasbord" of American denominationalism.

This either-or stance obscures the possibility of a third approach. One could begin from Mennonite distinctives but conclude that the classical affirmations are essential for developing a complete and balanced theology. One could conclude, that is, that Mennonite distinctives, essential as they are, constitute an incomplete expression of everything essential to faith and need to be joined with classical teachings.

Weaver, however, claims that beliefs in Jesus' full deity and humanity "provide nothing for discipleship" and implies that they are largely irrelevant for Mennonite faith. But are they? To affirm Jesus' full humanity is to affirm that, since his humanity is like ours, his teachings are practical for ordinary mortals. Jesus' full deity means that his divine love, wisdom, and companionship bestow on us the insight and energy to walk the ethical path.

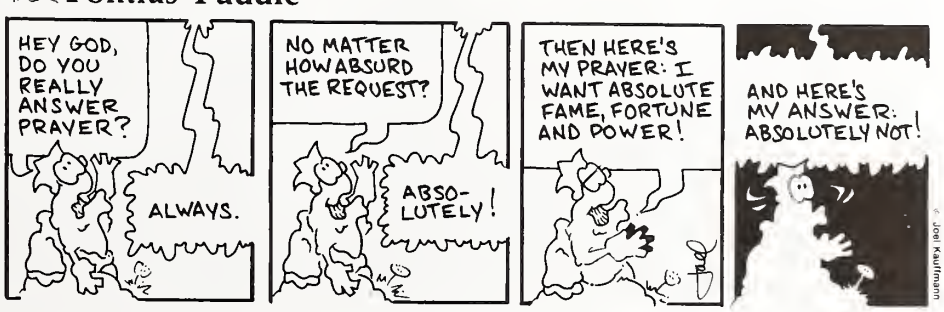
The apparent plausibility of Weaver's position is enhanced by one questionable historical affirmation and one questionable historical assumption.

The affirmation is that the Nicene Creed, because it was formulated during the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine, could only have emerged after the church had accommodated to violence and abandoned Jesus' ethic. History shows, however, that the Nicene formulation was a coherent conclusion to over 150 years of discussion carried on in the counter-cultural church with its many martyrs. Something like it would probably have arisen if Rome had never favored Christianity.

Weaver's questionable assumption is that affirmation of Jesus' deity does not belong among central Anabaptist teachings. Yet Anabaptists like Hans Denck, Pilgram Marpeck, Menno Simons, and Dirk Philips—unlike the mainline Reformers—clearly regarded

(continued on page 6)

Pontius' Puddle



salvation as "divinization"—as personal transformation by the energies of Christ's divine nature, which alone made possible the practice of his radical ethics. Most who did not use divinization language (like Balthasar Hubmaier) stressed the Holy Spirit's renewing work and so raised the issue of the Trinity.

I fear that Weaver's either-or approach could encourage further divisions among Mennonites—between those who stress ethics but suppose that they can or should reject the transcendent and spiritual dimensions affirmed by "classical" teachings; and those who hunger for spiritual relationship to God but suppose that they can or should reject ethics.

These two strands of Mennonites have been separated long enough. Further division of what belongs together can only hurt them both.

Thomas N. Finger
Harrisonburg, Va.

Virginia Takes Stand on Membership for Military Personnel (Jan. 30). With the peace issue taking the forefront in *Gospel Herald* in recent issue, I've failed to see anyone address one issue. That's how the military attracts persons by paying for their post-high-school studies.

This makes the military a tempting route to go. It is no wonder that many persons see the military as an answer to their dilemma of education and employment.

Unless we are prepared to put our money where our mouth is and provide assistance which will enable students to attend church-sponsored institutions, we might indeed lose our peace position, no matter how much teaching we provide.

I feel as though I am observing James 2:15-17 in a different form. This time we are telling people to keep out of the military without taking the time to find out why they are going that route in the first place.

Kenneth W. Cressman
New Hamburg, Ont.

Throughout the Jan. 30 issue of *Gospel Herald* about Mennonite education, schools such as EMU, Goshen, and Hesston are referred to as "the Mennonite colleges in North America." Why are not Bluffton and Bethel mentioned?

Since the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church are planning to merge, there needs to be more solidarity between the two groups—and that should take place first within our colleges.

When I was a student at Goshen, very few students knew about Bluffton or Bethel. Yet these schools are also strongly rooted in the Anabaptist faith and are genuinely concerned about peacemaking and stewardship.

I hope that *Gospel Herald* will make a more conscious effort to build bridges of faith and love with those from the General Conference. It can do so with something as simple as noting that Bluffton and Bethel are also colleges committed to the overall mission of the Mennonite church.

Brad Clinehens
Maplewood, Ohio

In the three main articles and your editorial about Mennonite higher education in the Jan. 30 issue of *Gospel Herald,* there was reference to Mennonite culture, the generic term "faith," multiculturalism, issues, peace, etc. Glaringly absent in the discussion was the word Christian or any direct reference or mention of Jesus Christ.

I've observed the same in literature and communication from the Mennonite colleges. There seems to be a great reluctance to identify themselves as Christian or to uphold the name and rightful position of Jesus Christ.

If this is any indication of the place of Jesus Christ in the educational processes in these institutions, it's not surprising that many of our young Christians choose non-Mennonite colleges. If our schools are Christ-centered, let them declare themselves. If they are not and don't intend to be, they should little expect the support and blessing of the church of Jesus Christ.

David H. Clymer
Shirleysburg, Pa.

In response to Kyle D. Longacre's article, ***Going Home Is the Most Difficult Cross-Cultural Experience*** (Jan. 30), I have but one comment: "I am not surprised!"

I do not wonder that many Mennonite students going to Mennonite colleges experience "culture shock." Four years ago, I was a new student at a Mennonite college. My home conference was perceived to be a notoriously conservative one. Because of that, what I believed was passed off as insignificant. If someone came from "that" conference, they were assumed to be too "backward" to understand the truth.

I agree that students need to struggle with issues like abortion, homosexuality, and women in ministry. However, so often the discussions at the Mennonite school I attended took place in a political rather than a faith context. The arguments were based on political philosophy rather than on faith in the person of Christ.

In these arguments, the Bible was largely irrelevant. To many of the students, the Bible was corrupted by human authorship. Or it was so open to interpretation that it carried negligible weight at best. In so many class discussions, the prevailing opinion was that the Christian must find the "Jesus way" based on their own interpretation because it was the only one which will be real to their own life.

In the Mennonite college I attended, faith was defined by ethics in the context of a community. It was defined by doing the right thing. Little attention was given to the mystery of the person of Jesus residing in the heart of the Christian by faith. The ability to live the Christian life came from individual will power. Being intellectually convinced that the "Jesus way" was the right way to live was the criterion for entrance into the community of faith. A dynamic relationship with the person of Jesus was rarely mentioned.

I am not optimistic about our Mennonite colleges. I see them following the path that other church colleges have historically followed. Perhaps the tendency lies in the fact that academic pursuits by nature lean away from faith and toward intellectualism.

I agree that dialogue is needed between Mennonite churches and colleges. But the faith in the churches should be transferred to the colleges rather than the intellectualism of the colleges being transferred to the churches. Unfortunately, the latter has been the case lately.

Henry Sollenberger
Suffolk, Va.

The forty days of Lent:

From introspection to life with new meaning

by Jim Bishop

It's a season of paradox.

Lent, the 40-day period between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, coincides with early spring—a period of renewal and exuberance. But it also is a time for many to engage in introspection, fasting, and penitence that culminates with the gladness and assurance of Easter.

In the midst of energizing freshness, if I am completely honest, I must stop and admit that I am not all that I say I am—or even imagine myself to be.

I may not administer the death penalty with a wooden cross, but I am still capable of crucifying my fellow human beings. Today it's done just as effectively with razor-sharp words, deadening silence, or smoldering anger and resentment toward those who have wronged me—either knowingly or unwittingly.

Why do I allow doubt, worry, and lethargic self-satisfaction to absorb my being? Life is meant to be lived to the fullest, not halfheartedly endured.

What is required to open myself afresh to new potentiality, to new ways of viewing the world around me, and to upgrading personal goals?

Life begins to take on new meaning:

- When I am no longer satisfied with the way things are and decide that no longer will I wait for some other person to make the first move toward righting a wrong.
- When I take the time to say "thank you," "nice job," "way to go," and "I appreciate what you did," to those around me—my family, friends, and work colleagues.
- When I take deliberate steps to care for my physical body, foster mental well-being, and determine to work at quitting one bad habit and cultivating a good one in its place.
- When I learn how to relax and just have fun.
- When I no longer compare myself to someone else or crave his or her possessions.
- When I show genuine interest in what others have to say, beginning with those closest to me—my spouse and family.
- When I show greater concern for the outward journey—not burning myself out by trying to be all things to all people but by determining a specific need locally that I can respond to and then pursuing it.
- When I go to anyone who has wronged me or who I have offended and seek forgiveness and reconciliation, striving to the best of my ability to live at peace with those around me.
- When I include in my wardrobe the belt of truth, the shoes of peace, and the shield of faith.

That's when personal transformation begins to harmonize with this marvelous springtime season amid the encircling penumbra of daily demands, tension, and strife.

What's encouraging is that for most of us it's not too late to work at internal and external changes that help us to become all we are meant to be.

Most amazing of all, the Carpenter, with nail-pierced hands and spear-punctured side, still whispers today, "Come, receive my abundance of grace."

Jim Bishop works in the communications department at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. This article first appeared in a regular column Bishop writes for the local newspaper, Daily News Record.

Lent is a time to fac

Can we gain something from Jesus' approach to death? Or do we understand him only as God, making his way of coping with death unattainable?

by Ronda Suderman King

Am I dying? Am I dying?" Peg asked me insistently. When I hesitantly replied yes, she sank back onto her pillow and said, "Well, that helps."

As a hospice social worker, I have been intrigued, sometimes saddened, and often encouraged by the ways persons and their family and friends prepare for death.

In many ways, the period of Lent was a hospice experience for Jesus. He certainly seemed to be aware of his "life-threatening" situation. Jesus even began to predict his coming death and resurrection early on in his public ministry. Was Jesus' experience human enough that we can gain something from his way of approaching death? Or do we understand Jesus only as God, which makes his ways of coping with impending death unattainable for us?

It is difficult for me to imagine what it is like to face something like cancer and to wonder how long I have to live. Even more unimaginable is being told that my life expectancy is six months or less. Shock and disbelief must surely arise immediately. At least that is what many people have told me as they try to explain, in the inadequate medium of words, their history of coping with sickness as it progressed into a terminal illness.

Jack, a 57-year-old hospice patient, stopped significant communication with everyone, including his wife, when he was told he had a terminal illness. Debbie, on the other hand, immediately called her pastor to plan her funeral (which really caught him off guard) and invited me to attend, exclaiming, "It's going to be great!"

When Jesus talked about his future suffering and death for the first time in the book of Mark, the Scriptures record that "he said all this quite openly" (Mark 8:32). This statement may refer to his courage in speaking out in the public arena, or it may be about his courage to be publicly open about his death.

Thoughts and feelings that come soon after the initial shock of learning one will die are related to guilt, regrets, and "if only's." Along with the "if only's," there is often a reviewing of one's life—a serious and sobering examination of one's purpose, past accomplishments, and things one had hoped to achieve.

In the beginning of Mark, Jesus states his purpose clearly: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; *I have come to call not the righteous but sinners"* (Mark 2:17—emphasis mine).

Jesus knew what he came to do, and he knew his message well. "The kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15). "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him" (John 17:1-2). If we were able to articulate our sense of purpose as clearly and unapologetically as Jesus, would the facing of our death be reformed?

Balancing hope, resignation, and acceptance is a delicate and ambiguous part of living with dying when death is more imminent than most of us care to be aware of. How does one maintain hope while accepting death? Many times it is the families of hospice patients, not the patients themselves, who dictate that death and dying not be addressed. They do this with good intentions, often to protect the patients from losing hope so they will not "give up" (i.e., die).

But we need to redefine hope if we are to possess it throughout our dying. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection and makes these statements in Mark 8:35-37: "Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?"

Look at that passage again in light of one's own death or that of a loved one having a terminal illness. As followers of Jesus, do we dare live and die with the courage it takes to willingly die? Or are the words of Jesus only prescriptive for our attitudes while we are in good health?

our dying

"Death is a part of life" is a phrase I often hear from hospice patients and their families. It's used, I believe, as an attempt to make sense of pain. On the other hand, Jesus indicates that living has as much to do with dying as dying has to do with living. In other words, life is a part of death!

Often when one is dying, there is an identity change from being one who gives to one who receives. This is more than a simple alteration if it is to be graceful. It is a transformation. So much of our life revolves around an identity of what we can do. As a body deteriorates, as one's limitations become more apparent, and as one's dependency on others increases, it is imperative that a shift be made in order to really live while dying. The shift is to become content with one's being instead of one's doing. In more theological terms, one shifts from feeling adequate through grace rather than through works.

I do not suggest that this is easy. But when it happens, it gives opportunity for the dying person to bless others in manifold ways.

A spouse of a hospice patient told me this story. Curt was already sleeping a lot and was increasingly incoherent when one night he woke Denise. He wanted to get out of bed and needed help to do it. Curt wanted to get out on the opposite side of his hospital bed so that he could sit on the couch (instead of his recliner). He wanted Denise to sit next to him. Denise helped him to the couch, and Curt put his arm around her and kissed her. Curt and Denise then sat arm-in-arm for about 10 minutes, after which she helped him back to bed.

What a precious moment! And how special for her that he thought to give her that kind of gift. A gift from who he was—her husband—instead of what he could do. He died five days later. I knew that Curt did not want to die, but it is quite evident that he accepted his increasing debilitation in a way that allowed him to give a wonderful gift that will comfort Denise for a lifetime.

When we believe a loved one's death is near, it is a common practice to call family members home. Jesus, too, gathered his disciples around him in Gethsemane, requesting that they stay awake and pray. Death is a time to gather together for support and love.

I remember well the short time we had with my mother-in-law before her death. We stood around her bed singing, praying, and crying as she breathed her last breaths. Her death was peaceful—just a gradual ending of the work of her lungs and heart. Did our presence make her death peaceful? It would be presumptuous for me to suggest that. But the gathering of loved ones gives evidence to the enduring quality of love that continues on even after death.

Jesus' death was anything but peaceful. Whether or not it was clear to him what kind of death it would be, he had accepted that death and prepared for it. Lent is a time when we, his disciples, are invited to do the same.

Ronda Suderman King is a member of the Mennonite Church of the Servant, Wichita, Kan. She has worked as a social worker for Hospice, Inc., for the past 4 1/2 years.

In the face of death

During the six weeks of Lent, we can participate more fully in the commemoration of Jesus' approaching death by being more deliberate about facing our own. The following activities are suggestions to help focus thoughts and actions:

Week 1: Communicate more openly fears and hopes regarding your dying to at least one person.

Week 2: Ponder your purpose in life overall. Think about that purpose for this week. Be on the watch for the opportunities that Jesus will bring to help fulfill that purpose.

Week 3: Thank God each morning for life within death. Thank God each evening for death within life.

Week 4: Willingly die in one area of life. Some examples might include giving up a certain food for the week, fasting for one day, giving money to the person you least want to give it to, spending an evening in silence, or turning off the television and not reading the newspaper for the entire week.

Week 5: Give someone a gift from your being instead of doing something for them.

Week 6: Organize a gathering of family and friends to celebrate your love for each other.

—Ronda Suderman King

Gospel Herald to merge with other publications for a new integrated Mennonite church magazine

Pittsburgh, Pa.—The Mennonite Church's weekly magazine, *Gospel Herald,* will be merged into a new periodical for an integrated Mennonite church.

That was the decision of the Mennonite Publication Board (MPB) meeting here Feb. 9-10. The action is comparable to one made earlier by the Division of General Services of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) concerning the future of its periodical, *The Mennonite.*

No date has been set for the first issue of the merged periodical. However, an Integration Committee has asked to see plans for this publication by the summer of 1997. It has also asked that publishing interests in Canada—including *Mennonite Reporter,* published by Mennonite Publishing Service, and *Nexus,* published by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada—be included in the merger talks.

MPB also appointed two persons to an advisory group to work on creating a merged publication: Ron Guengerich, Hesston, Kan., currently an MPB member; and Shirley Yoder Brubaker, Harrisonburg, Va., a former MPB member.

Integration proved to be a topic to which the board turned periodically during its two-day meeting.

Mennonite Publishing House (MPH) staff brought to the board a proposal for developing a new corporate image and graphics standard, including a new logo and letterhead.

"I'm concerned about how this will be interpreted," said Calvin Britsch, Archbold, Ohio. "The reality is that it has nothing to do with integration, but the perception will be that it does."

An interim image. Jack Scott, MPH staffer who heads the corporate image work, noted that the current identity was developed in 1972. "We're looking for something to serve us for the next five to seven years until integration happens."

After discussion, the board agreed to authorize staff to proceed with developing the new image.

MPB also agreed to plans to develop a joint *Mennonite Yearbook* (MC) and *Handbook of Information* (GC) by as early as 1998.

Board members struggled with how to develop more loyalty to MPH until full integration occurs.

"Today people say about *Gospel Herald,* 'this is our publication—how dare you print this or that?' " said Elaine Stoltzfus, Ages, Ky. "How can we get the denomination to feel the same about everything we print? Is it important for the church to have Anabaptist-Mennonite literature? If so, then the publishing house needs the church's support."

In a review of his work for the past nine years, MPB gave unanimous support to its publisher, J. Robert Ramer. The board also appointed him to another five-year term beginning Aug. 31, 1996.

Possible deficit. More sobering was the report from MPH's treasurer, Reuben Savanick. He noted that the publishing house will likely close the current year with a deficit.

"We were hit hard in the stores during December and January," Savanick reported. "The weather closed our largest stores for a total of seven days during that time. And as goes Provident Bookstores in Lancaster and Souderton, so goes MPH," Savanick said.

In an effort to improve the bottom line, the board agreed to close Park City's Provident next year. Park City is a branch store in Lancaster, Pa., which has not been able to pay its own way.

MPB approved a $15.5 million operated budget for MPH for 1996. The budget projects a net revenue of $227,000.—*J. Lorne Peachey*

"Pharming" flowers. *San Lucas, Guatemala (MCC)*—Doña Manuela clips ixbut in the medicinal plant garden at the Center of Christian Services headquarters in this small town. Ixbut is useful in increasing milk production of breast-feeding women. Mennonite Central Committee worker Kerri Garner serves with the medicinal plant program. "When they or their loved ones fall ill, poor Guatemalans often heed the advice of pharmaceutical vendors who have little medical knowledge and who often 'prescribe' strong, potentially dangerous medicines without a doctor's diagnosis," says Garner. "Plants' medicinal qualities, together with traditional knowledge and customs, allow families to treat common sicknesses without resorting to expensive chemical medicines." Garner helps to keep up the center's garden and promotes the use of the plants in indigenous communities.

Jim Juhnke uses a chart to highlight some of the history of the Swiss-German roots of the Mennonite Church and the Dutch-Russian beginnings of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Juhnke and John Ruth led a recent Lancaster, Pa., meeting on integration.

Integration is 'partial healing of great separation,' say historians at meeting about coming merger

Lancaster, Pa.—Kurtzes versus Klassens. Shoofly pies versus zwieback. Plain-dressing versus political involvement. Creedal versus congregational.

"We oversimplify each other," said John Ruth at a recent meeting at Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa., to discuss integration of the Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC).

And although increasing racial, ethnic, and theological diversity has changed the face of the two churches, the merger still means bringing together two different historical and cultural streams as much as unifying institutions and boards, said historians Ruth and Jim Juhnke.

Charting historical differences. Ruth, an MC historian and filmmaker, and Juhnke, a GC history professor at Bethel (Kan.) College, explained the Swiss-German and Dutch-Russian Anabaptist roots of the two churches at "The Tie That Binds," a Feb. 8 meeting sponsored by seven Lancaster County MC and GC congregations.

The decision to integrate at the Wichita '95 convention represents the "partial healing of a great separation," said Juhnke. He drew a chart comparing some historical differences between the two churches even while in Europe.

For example, the Schleitheim Confession of the MCs probably demonstrates the monastic concept of separation from the world because it was drafted by a former Benedictine monk, Michael Sattler, said Juhnke. Swiss-German Anabaptists were persecuted for a longer time than the Dutch, and when they came to the United States they established boundaries like plain dress between themselves and the world.

Dutch and Russian Mennonites, on the other hand, often became successful business owners and professionals; hence the generalization that GCs often identify more with society and are less "humble" than MCs.

Juhnke comically illustrated the "personality difference" between MCs and GCs for the audience by first walking with shoulders stooped and shy looks at the audience and then by marching across the stage with shoulders back and a defiant expression. He also recounted an earlier conversation in which Ruth said to him, "The Mennonite genius is humility."

"Speak for yourself!" Juhnke responded with a laugh.

In 1847 a group split off from the MC Franconia (Pa.) Conference over issues of plain dress, bishops, and separation from other denominations. Dutch and Russian immigrants then joined the "New Mennonites" and became prominent as the GC church spread westward.

"Unofficially" going on. Ruth said that while he was growing up, the two Mennonite groups "were fairly happy to characterize each other simplistically." But "integration has been unofficially going on" for years, he said, especially through Mennonite Central Committee as well as other joint ventures.

"Integration does not mean everyone becoming the same," said Juhnke, referring to diversity of structures at the conference and district levels that he expects will continue.

But numerous links like the reading of Scripture with particular consideration for the life of Christ, the peace stance, and the importance of fellowship have driven the integration process, said the two historians.

"We know instinctively that we are a people of peace," Ruth said, adding that this provides a sense of fellowship that will be an asset during integration. "I don't know if anything else tastes just like that [fellowship]," said Ruth.

The development of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* was a "unique phenomenon in Mennonite history," said Ruth, because of the participatory process that created it. Both he and Juhnke said that document will be important to the process of the next years.

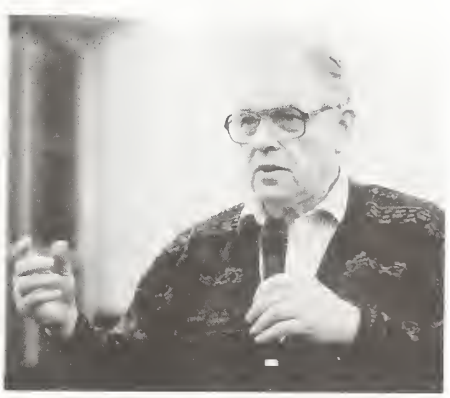
Fears about the future. Ruth expressed fears that "we would average things down to suit each other"—just "paper things over" rather than deal directly with issues like the peace position.

Juhnke said another danger is loss of support for churchwide institutions. "People will wonder, 'what's happening to that we were loyal to?' " he said.

One audience member mentioned the fear that some African-Americans expressed at Wichita that the concerns of minorities may get lost in the shift. Someone else wondered how the merger will affect other streams of Mennonites.

The evening grew out of conversations between three pastors—Vern Rempel, Urbane Peachey, and Joe Miller. Rempel said that more such meetings between their churches are in their plans.

"We're committed to helping these groups understand each other," said Miller.—*Valerie Weaver*



John Ruth explains a point during the discussion about integration.

New models in health care:
New Orleans clinic listens to residents for direction

New Orleans, La. (MCC)—The list of Cindy Wiebe's nursing duties at the St. Thomas Health Clinic here begins where one would expect: stress management and personal hygiene education, health screening and dental referrals. Her responsibilities as nurse for Kidmed, a Medicaid program centering on health assessment from birth through age 20, don't appear unusual. And in most respects the clinic in which she works is similar to clinics providing low-cost health care in neighborhoods throughout North America.

But the description of Wiebe's nursing duties doesn't end the way it begins. Soon it is peppered with words such as "accountability," "undoing racism," and "personal corporate responsibility." Something else is happening in St. Thomas—something Wiebe is obviously proud to be a part of.

Residents shape health care. "Our administrators take every new initiative and program change they are considering to STCC [St. Thomas Irish Channel Consortium]. If the community doesn't approve the changes, they don't happen," Wiebe notes. "This slows things down, but it's worth it. At its best, residents help shape how we provide health care," she adds.

STCC is a resident-led group of service providers and community residents working to address racism in social service agencies serving the community. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has worked with the Resident Council of St. Thomas federal housing development since 1985.

Asking about accountability. While these ideas of accountability and empowerment were not the ones she brought with her from her home in Winnipeg, Man., Wiebe sees connections with ideas she learned in nursing school and hopes to apply them to future work she does after her term with MCC.

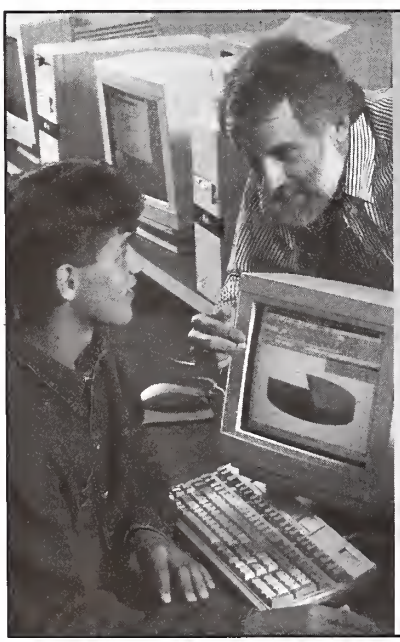
Speaking of the 150 people who receive services through the clinic's Kidmed program, Wiebe observes, "Just as we want our patients to begin taking more responsibility for their own health through education and access to information, the community has taken a stronger role in determining what form our services will take. That isn't always easy, but as we ask questions about accountability, some answers begin to appear."

A partial answer took the form of training to undo racism in which all clinic staff participated. Conducted by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, a national anti-racism training group, facilitators helped the group talk about issues of race, power, and community involvement. "We were able to begin to deal with the fact that white people are found only at the upper levels of the organization," Wiebe says.

Cindy Wiebe works as a nurse in a health clinic in New Orleans, La. Residents of the community approve each new initiative and program of the clinic, thereby shaping the direction of the health care they receive.

In return for the challenge and controversy that inevitably arrive any time difficult issues are addressed, Wiebe says she receives the gift of personal interaction with those she seeks to serve. "Talking with people about their health and their lives, practicing wholistic medicine—all of this together makes this job worthwhile," she says.

—*Jody Miller Shearer*



Caring faculty.

"What I find most rewarding about teaching are the 'aha!' moments, when we gain new insights. I enjoy talking one-on-one with students about current issues and about their future careers. In the business and economics department, our office doors are never closed."

—Rick Yoder, *economics professor*

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EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Learning to trust the senses: Mennonite artists gather for support, worship

Cincinnati, Ohio—"Here on this page / I will tell / what I know," read Raylene Hinz-Penner from one of her poems at the recent Mennonite Arts Weekend here. "We deserve that / at least."

Telling what they know—with pens, brushes, voices, and bodies—was the task of the presenting artists and many of the participants at the Feb. 2-4 conference, held at Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship. Almost 200 people registered for the third Mennonite Arts Weekend, designed to encourage and strengthen artists in the church, according to committee member Christine Shumacher.

The theme of the weekend, "The Body in Art and Spirituality," was initiated by Ann Hostetler of Megnon, Wis., member of the arts weekend advisory board.

"We don't trust our senses," said Ken Nafziger, director of the Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) Chamber Singers. "We think they have to be filtered through our head first."

Separating body and mind. Illustrating that theme, Ted Swartz told participants the story of showing his young son where a relative was to be buried. "That's where they're going to put the body," he told him, pointing to the grave.

"And where are they going to put the head?" asked his son.

That separation of body and head, emotion and intellect, is not unlike what we do in church, said Swartz, an actor from Harrisonburg, Va., who along with Lee Eshleman presented numerous theater sketches during the weekend. "We come with our heads and leave our bodies sitting in the pews."

Chuck Neufeld performs in a Saturday evening concert at the Arts Weekend.

The weekend featured workshops led by a sculptor, playwright, filmmaker, and poets, hymn sings led by Mary Oyer, a coffeehouse of performances by participants, and a 30-piece visual art exhibit and silent auction. This was the first time that the art was exhibited in the church rather than at a local gallery.

Living Mirror *released.* The *Living Mirror,* a publication of poetry and short fiction by Mennonite writers ages 8-18, was also featured during the weekend. Several of the youth with entries in the book read their writing during the Saturday evening concert.

Saturday evening was also the premiere of "Wrestling Jacob," a choral piece written by Brent Weaver and performed by the EMU Chamber Singers and soloist Katrina Zook. Based on the story of Jacob wrestling the angel and the hymn "Come O Thou Traveler Unknown," the piece aims to communicate the "thump and grunt of the struggle," said Weaver. The crashing chords of the piece filter into sustained melodic strands as the narrator realizes that "thy nature and name is love."

Weaver also said in the Sunday morning worship service that the creative process is not unlike this struggle between Jacob and the angel. "Sometimes, in the midst of the struggle . . . the morning breaks . . . and realization of a blessing comes."

David Waltner-Toews, a poet and professor at University of Guelph, said that art breaks open a form of Christianity beyond a set of rules—"it's much richer and more complicated."

Reflecting these complexities has made some in the church suspicious of artists partly because it "does reveal a community's flaws," said Hinz-Penner, professor at Bethel (Kan.) College.

"There are artists thriving in and among us, but many don't feel as free as they could to contribute to congregations," Hostetler said. "The church needs artists, but they don't *know* they need artists," she added during a Saturday afternoon forum discussion.

Artists keep bringing their work to the church and planning events like these simply because "it fills a need," said Cheryl Pannabecker, one of the planners. She and four other members of CMF founded the weekend four years ago, and they say that with swelling registration numbers, more such weekends are to come.—*Valerie Weaver*

Becoming 'water' sisters. *Mt. Joy, Pa.*—Carrie Lynelle Thomas of Ephrata, Pa., prepared artwork specifically for the Women's Spring Fellowship of the Lancaster Conference Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC), scheduled for March 28. "Sisters" is the theme of the evening that features a girls' choir, Scripture readings, and six interest groups covering topics ranging from mentoring to racism. "Many of us have blood sisters," says Phyllis Pellman Good, president of the Lancaster Conference WMSC. "But our task these days as women is to discover and cultivate 'water' sisters—those women with whom we share common faith, common intentions, common intentions, and common struggles."

- **MCC helps feed Koreans.** North Koreans suffering from hunger will soon receive food from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The agency will contribute $86,500 toward the purchase of 1,000 metric tons of rice, valued at $473,000. The rice will be purchased in Hong Kong for distribution in North Korea, where an estimated 130,000 people are on the brink of salvation. The food emergency is partly a result of severe flooding last summer.—*John Longhurst*

- **Kraybill named provost.** Donald B. Kraybill has been named provost of Messiah College, Grantham, Pa. The provost is the senior administrator responsible for the academic and student life programs. Kraybill is currently professor of religion and philosophy and director of the Young Center at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. Kraybill has written or edited 14 books, including *The Upside-Down Kingdom.*

- **Teacher wins award.** Marisa Yoder, science teacher at Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind., was named National Secondary Conservation Education Teacher of the Year by the National Association of Conservation Districts. She was nominated by the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District for her "dedication to her students and the environment." Yoder and Roy Hartzler teach an environmental science course that emphasizes experiential learning.—*Gospel Evangel*

- **Hesston breaks ground.** Hesston (Kan.) College broke the ground for Lemons Center on Feb. 17. The 2,900 square-foot addition to Charles Hall will house the nursing program. Construction of the Lemons Center and renovation of Charles Hall are part of the $15.6 million Hesston College Plan for a New Century: Enhancing Excellence campaign.

- ***Herald* begins home page.** *Gospel Herald* now has a home page on the World Wide Web. Updated weekly, the page includes titles, authors, and short summaries of the feature articles in each issue 5-6 days before publication. The address is *http://www.mph.lm.com/GHerald.html.*

- **New appointments:**

Robert Charles, Mennonite Board of Missions representative for Europe and West Africa.

Dale Schumm, Mennonite Board of Missions director for Asia and the Middle East.

Ann Minter, Hesston (Kan.) College admissions counselor.

Karin Wall, Hesston (Kan.) College admissions counselor.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Bruno Penner was installed as pastor of Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Newport, Wash., on Jan. 7, by Larry Hauder.

John Troyer was licensed and installed as copastor at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Feb. 11, by Charlotte Holsopple Glick and Russell Krabill.

Beth Ranck Yoder was ordained at Perkasie Mennonite Church on Jan. 21 by Jim Derstine.

- **Coming events:**

50th anniversary celebration, Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz., March 23-24. Activities include a church fair, history drama, and pig roast. Special invitation to VS workers who served in Phoenix area from 1946 to present. More information available from Si Hershberger c/o Sunnyside Mennonite Church, 9835 N. 7th St., Phoenix, AZ 85020.

"Lancaster Weekend" of Eastern Mennonite University, March 23-24. Over 20 faculty and staff will share music and reflections at a Saturday dinner for alumni and parents. Faculty and staff, including Joe Lapp and Lee Snyder, will give presentations in 23 churches on Sunday. More information and registrations for the dinner are available from Shirley Garber, 717 872-7599.

Quilt auction, Columbia (Mo.) Mennonite and Church of the Brethren Fellowship, April 26-27. Includes woodworking, craft, and bake sale and benefits a building fund. More information available from Denise Gabbert at 314 874-1190.

50th anniversary celebration, Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite School, May 11. Former patrons, teachers, and alumni are invited to participate in anniversary and reunion activities. Anniversary book available for purchase. More information and reservations are available from 717 738-4266.

Family and youth ministry class, Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), Winnipeg, Man., May 27-June 1. Three-hour credit course, taught by Roland D. Martinson, is open for both college and seminary credit. More information available from 204 888-6781.

- **Job openings:**

Staff associate, Mennonite Conciliation Service of Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa. Full-time, three-year volunteer position is available June 1996. Qualifications include training and experience in mediation, organizing, management of information systems and word processing skills, newsletter production experience, and writing, speaking, listening, and problem-solving skills. Contact Goldie Kuhns, 21 S. 12th St., PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500; phone 717 859-1151. Applications due April 30.

Teaching positions, Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, Iowa. Physics/chemistry and choral music/orchestra instructors needed for grades 9-12. Contact principal Wilbur Yoder, 319 683-2586.

NEW MEMBERS

Albuquerque, N.M.: Anita Yoder, Rusk and Nancy Kanagy, and Scott Walker.

First, Middlebury, Ind.: Wilbur and Fannie Schlabach and Elizabeth Troyer.

Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa.: Lyle K. Canada, LaMar Freed, Jeremy Frey, Carol Harps, Judy Leatherman, Grace Lynch, Mel Marmer, and Susan Moyer.

Marion, Chambersburg, Pa.: Scott Ashway.

Summit, Barberton, Ohio: Michelle King, Adam Peters, and Alex Peters.

BIRTHS

Bustos, Lori Litwiller and Steve, Goshen, Ind., Joshua Steven (first child), Jan. 26.

Culp-Ressler, Ren Culp and Wendell Ressler, Lancaster, Pa., Seth (second child), March 3.

Dombach, Deb Harrison and Eric, Lancaster, Pa., Jeremiah Eric (first child), Dec. 20.

Frey, Pati and Phil, Lancaster, Pa., Andrew (first child), Aug. 6.

Garber, Marcella Hostetler and LaMonte, Lancaster, Pa., Madeline Rose (first child), Jan. 21.

Greaser, Stacey Steingrabe and Terry, New Columbia, Pa., Rashelle Lynn (first child), Jan. 31.

Hallock, Lois L. Schmitt and Donald V., Bothell, Wash., Taylor Lynn (second child), Dec. 10.

Hendricks, Joanne and Harold, Green Lane, Pa., Jonathan Lee (fourth child), Dec. 25.

Hess, Barbara Egan and Don, Lancaster, Pa., Naomi Egan (fourth child), Oct. 14.

Horst, Marjo Stutzman and Gerry, Aurora, Ohio, Jordan Kyle (third child), Nov. 16.

Kauffman, Janine Helmuth and Jeff, Sturgis, Mich., Emily Jae (first child), Dec. 15.

Logan, Sarah and James, Lancaster, Pa., Davis Ogima (first child), Oct. 8.

Leichty, Lynelle Roth and Steve, Wayland, Iowa, Kaila Ann (third child), Jan. 13.

Mercure, Janet Burgess and Michael, Doylestown, Pa., Ethan Michael Burgess (second child), Nov. 29.

Mishler, Lois Mohler and Brian, Lancaster, Pa., Aaron Daniel (second child), Nov. 5.

Steinmann, Darla Bauman and Roger, New Hamburg, Ont., Noah David Bauman (second child), Dec. 21.

Stoltzfus, Cynthia Lapp and Eric, Riverdale, Md., Cecilia Anne Lapp (first child), Oct. 9.

Troyer, Kelly Miller and Jon, Middlebury, Ind., Jared Ray (fourth child), Jan. 4.

Vogt, Laurie and Ron, Akron, Pa., Emily (first child), May 11.

Walters, Carmella Hochstedler and Jim, Kokomo, Ind., Michaela Janae (fourth child), Jan. 9.

Zehr, Elizabeth and Randy, Kitchener, Ont., Andrea Lynn (second child), Dec. 22.

MARRIAGES

Assefa-Christner: Surafel Assefa, Goshen, Ind. (College), and Jessica Louise Christner, Clarence, N.Y. (Alden), Dec. 23, by Titus Kauffman.

Barrero-Boll: Jose Barrero and Lucyann Boll (Community of Lancaster), Sept. 23, by Bob Martin.

Basinger-Wiles: Mark Basinger, Dalton, Ohio (Pleasant

View), and Nancy Wiles, Wooster, Ohio (United Methodist), Nov. 18, by John M. Miller.

Bishop-Hummel: Jennifer Bishop (Community), and Dallas Hummel, Jan. 27, by Phil Kniss and Jane Peifer.

Eberly-Shumaker: Gwen Eberly and Rod Shumaker, Sept. 16, by Vernon Rempel.

Good-Knapp: William Good, Rocky Mount, N.C. (Hopedale), and Sara Knapp (Apostolic), Nov. 18, by H. James Smith.

Houser-Valkers: Amy C. Houser (Community of Lancaster), and Steve Valkers, Sept. 9, by Vernon Rempel.

Hershberger-Lehman: Robert Hershberger, Mt. Eaton, Ohio (Calvary Chapel), and Christa Lehman, Kidron, Ohio (Kidron), Nov. 25, by John M. Miller and Todd Martin.

Johnson-Roesch: Pamela Johnson, Corfu, N.Y. (Alden), and George Roesch, Marilla, N.Y. (Alden), Nov. 25, by Titus Kauffman.

DEATHS

Buehler, Lavina Bauman, 88, Wallenstein, Ont. Born: June 20, 1907. Died: Jan. 13, 1996, Listowel, Ont. Survivors—children: Melvin, Martha Brubacher, Willard, Ken; sister: Adeline Martin; 17 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: William Buehler (husband). Funeral: Jan. 17, Hawkesville Mennonite Church, by Don Penner. Burial: Hawkesville Cemetery.

Buschert, Robert C., 71, Goshen, Ind. Born: Nov. 28, 1924, Cambridge, Ont., to Chester and Mary Edna Snyder Buschert. Died: Jan. 22, 1996, Elkhart, Ind., of leukemia. Survivors—wife: Joy Martin Buschert; children: Allen, Russell, John Ross; brothers: Donald, David; 3 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Assembly Mennonite Church. Funeral: Jan. 26, College Mennonite Church, by Mary Lehman Yoder and Harold Bauman. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

Drohan, Hattie Mae Stauffer, 89, Mount Joy, Pa. Born: April 17, 1906, Lancaster County, Pa., to Samuel and Maggie Vogel Stauffer. Died: Jan. 29, 1996, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—husband: Carl B. Drohan; children: Kenneth L., James D.; 2 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Mount Joy Mennonite Church. Memorial service: Feb. 3, Landis Homes, by Joe Sherer and Donald Good. Burial: Kraybill Mennonite Cemetery.

Gerig, Doris Marie Graber, 82, Wayland, Iowa. Born: Oct. 23, 1923, Wayland, Iowa, to Peter J. and Sarah Rich Graber. Died: Dec. 15, 1995, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Survivors—husband: Milburn Gerig; children: Joan, Jean, Sandy, Faye, Beth, Pam; brothers and sisters: Dillon, Dennis, Dwight, and Doreen Graber, Dru Rector, Dee Deck; 13 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 17, Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, by Roger Farmer and Ruben Chupp. Body donated for research.

Kandel, Elsie Miller, 72, Berlin, Ohio. Born: March 31, 1923, Holmes County, Ohio, to William L. and Barbara Kandel Miller. Died: Feb. 1, 1996, Berlin, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—husband: David Kandel; children: Sharon Yoder, Clel, Karl, Earl, Gwen Hamsher, Brenda Patterson, Tony, Wes; brother: Clayton Miller; half brothers and sisters: Ray and Jay Miller, Pauline Basler, Ruth Miller, Orrvilla Yoder; 21 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Berlin Mennonite Church, by Ernest J. Hershberger and Richard Polcyn.

Luplow, Otto William, Jr., 77, Canfield, Ohio. Born: April 30, 1918, Youngstown, Ohio, to Otto William and Mary Englehart Luplow, Sr. Died: Jan. 24, 1996, Canfield, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—wife: Margaret Elizabeth "Peg" Stanton Luplow; son: Gary O.; one grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 27, Midway Mennonite Church, by Larry Rohrer and Marc Hershberger. Cremated.

Miller, Crist C., 78, Middlebury, Ind. Born: March 21, 1917, Haven, Kan., to Chris and Lydia Miller. Died: Jan. 14, 1996, Elkhart, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Mattie Gerber Miller; children: Karen VanderMaas, Sandy Hartzler, Dalis Bloss, Steven, Barry; sisters: Polly Christner, Anna Miller, Mary Yoder, Ida Stutzman; 10 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17, First Mennonite Church, by Joe Slabach and John F. Murray. Burial: Grace Lawn Cemetery.

Miller, Florence J. Beck, 95, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Aug. 25, 1900, Archbold, Ohio, to Henry and Emma Nofziger Beck. Died: Jan. 25, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Verden, Leonard, and Ella Beck, Elnora Rupp, Ilva Nofziger, Bernice Kauffman. Predeceased by: Harry Miller (husband), Maynard, SaraBelle, and ClaraBelle (infant children). Funeral: Jan. 27, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman, Lois Hartman, and Charles Gautsche. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Miller, Wilbur, 82, Shipshewana, Ind. Born: Nov. 17, 1913, LaGrange, Ind., to Moses and Lydia Patterson Miller. Died: Dec. 22, 1995, LaGrange County, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Catherine Hostetler Miller, children: Dale, Dianne Litweiler, Darlene Geyer; 10 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 27, Emma Mennonite Church, by John C. Murray. Burial: Miller Cemetery.

Newswanger, Marian Eby, 55, Strasburg, Pa. Born: Oct. 8, 1940, Manheim Twp., Pa., to John S. and Mary Herr Eby. Died: Jan. 27, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of adult respiratory distress syndrome. Survivors—husband: R. Wesley Newswanger; children: Lynda, Ryan, Daryl; brothers and sister: Melvin and Herbert Eby, Lois Sauder. Congregational membership: First Deaf Mennonite Church. Funeral: Jan. 31, Mellingers Mennonite Church, by Paul Zehr and Roy Bender. Burial: Strasburg Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Oswald, Noble L., 72, Aurora, Ohio. Born: Jan. 30, 1923, Charm, Ohio, to Herbert and Cora Hostetler Oswald. Died: Jan. 19, 1996, Ravenna, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Aldean Schweitzer Oswald; children: Gary, Herbert, Daniel, Carol Yoder, Mary Sly, Marlene Mikula; brothers and sister: James, Edward, Mervin, Marilyn Miller; 15 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Donald (son). Funeral and burial: Jan. 22, Aurora Mennonite Church, by Marlin Birkey.

Ruby, Marion Catherine Roth, 89, Tavistock, Ont. Born: Jan. 17, 1907, East Zorra Twp., Ont., to Samuel S. and Barbara Oesch Roth. Died: Jan. 23, 1996, Tavistock, Ont. Survivors—children: Samuel, John, Elda Steinman, Marjorie Forler, Joyce Brenneman, Patricia Bast, Sharon Simmons; 18 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Amos William Ruby (husband) and Douglas (son). Funeral and burial: Jan. 26, East Zorra Mennonite Church, by Orland Gingerich and Greg Yantzi.

Schrock, Mildred Burkey, 74, LaGrange, Ind. Born: Dec. 19, 1921, Elkhart, Ind., to Benjamin and Lizzie Beverstein Burkey. Died: Jan. 16, 1996, Elkhart County, Ind., of Parkinson's disease. Survivors—husband: Freeman Schrock; children: Don, Judy Stephenson; 4 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18, Emma Mennonite Church, by John C. Murray. Burial: Shore Cemetery.

Schweitzer, Anna Roth, 86, Julesburg, Colo. Born: June 30, 1909, Milford, Neb., to Joseph C. and Rosa Zimmerman Roth. Died: Dec. 31, 1995, Julesburg, Colo. Survivors—children: Donald, Darrel, Grace Schweitzer Smith, Ruth; brother: Roy Roth; 12 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elmer Schweitzer (husband) and Loren (son). Funeral: Jan. 4, Julesburg Mennonite Church, by Arthur J. Roth. Burial: Hillside Cemetery.

Swartzendruber, Val, 86, St. Lawrence, S.D. Born: July 14, 1909, Hydro, Okla., to Valentine and Mary Ann Rhodes Swartzendruber. Died: Jan. 22, 1996, Miller, S.D., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Ethel Carrier Swartzendruber; children: Stanley, Gary, Omar; brother and sisters: Jacob, Barbara, Mary Jane, Katie Anna Birkey; 5 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 26, St. Lawrence Community Church, by Lee Smith. Burial: St. Lawrence Cemetery.

Yoder, Nora Fry, 86, Topeka, Ind. Born: Sept. 14, 1909, Michigan, to Ammon and Fannie Yoder Frey. Died: Jan. 10, 1996, LaGrange County, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Raphael Yoder; children: Cheryl Miller, Fred, Maurice, Gordon; sisters: Martha Goodremont, Dorothy Hill; 2 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13, Emma Mennonite Church, by John C. Murray. Burial: Shore Cemetery.

Obituary correction: Anna Mary Sensenig Mast (Jan. 23, 1996, *Gospel Herald*) was also predeceased by Pearl Mast Hurst (daughter).

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THE LAST WORD

'Happy Birthday' at 100 by 400

They sang "Happy Birthday" for my father-in-law, John R. Wenger, during the worship service on Sunday, Feb. 4, at Lindale Mennonite Church near Harrisonburg, Va.

"We're beginning a new tradition," pastor Loren Horst said in opening the service. "Every time one of our members turns 100, we'll sing for them during worship."

That's how old my father-in-law had turned two days earlier. We members of his family, some 50 strong, drove and flew from all over the United States and Canada to join him for a weekend of celebration. On Saturday afternoon, in spite of a fresh eight inches of snow that paralyzed much of Virginia, some 150 of Daddy's friends from church and community joined us to listen to his stories and wish him good health and God's blessing.

After a strenuous day that had even his grandchildren talking about how tired they were, Daddy was up early the next morning getting ready for church. Some of us thought that -4°F might make him decide to stay home. But, no, Daddy was in the front row with his clan stretched out behind him when the worship service began.

Afterward the family gathered at Daddy's house for lunch. My father-in-law still lives in the house in which he was born. It's an old Shenandoah Valley house, large enough to be divided into two parts so that his oldest daughter and her husband, both retired, can live beside Daddy and take care of him.

When noise from the talking of grandchildren who seldom see each other and great-grandchildren chasing birthday balloons got to be too much for him, even without his hearing aids, Daddy retreated to his side of the house. Eventually I followed and sat with him, enjoying the heat of his Warm Morning stove and talking about his favorite subject: the church.

"How many people do you think there were at Lindale this morning?" he asked.

"Oh, I dunno. Maybe close to 400."

There was a long silence, so long I looked to see if Daddy had nodded off. Instead I saw his eyes glistening.

"You know," he said, so quietly I leaned forward to catch his words. "When they built that new church building several years ago, I was against it. I said we didn't need more space. But one brother argued and told me that someday I'd see 400 people at Lindale." He didn't say it, but I knew he was thinking: "Today those 400 sang for me."

So my father-in-law, even at 100, changed his mind about yet something else in the church. The church has asked him to do it often.

When he accepted Christ and was baptized into the Mennonite Church at age 18, our denomination had just come through a stormy period that eventually led to the acceptance of Sunday schools. That was followed by arguments about modernism and fundamentalism—to be overshadowed by disagreements about pre-millenialism, amillenialism, or even (heaven forbid) no-millenialism.

And then there was the issue of dress. Daddy's wedding pictures show a dapper Southern gentlemen complete with vest and tie. Later, in order to teach Sunday school, Daddy gave up his "fancy" clothes for the "regulation" or "plain" coat. These too disappeared, and one of Daddy's tougher decisions on the Sunday of his 100th birthday was which necktie to wear.

Daddy has lived through arguments about war resistance, divorce and remarriage, and women in leadership. Today he asks questions —and has opinions—about homosexuality and accepting military members into the church. Even integration—which he was skeptical about at first—has captured his interest as he wonders how it's going to be done.

Through it all, Daddy has maintained a fierce loyalty to the church. *How* loyal became apparent to me when, in a discussion with some of his children and in-laws, he said: "I have *always* been satisfied with the church."

I remembered those words when we sang for Daddy on Feb. 4. Now I've been inspired by the hymns of the church and shivered through many a rendition of "606." But seldom have I felt so in love with the church as when the 400 who crowded into Lindale Mennonite Church that Sunday morning sang "Happy Birthday" to one who has served them as janitor, Sunday school teacher, trustee, song leader, and now the patriarch who tells the congregation's stories.

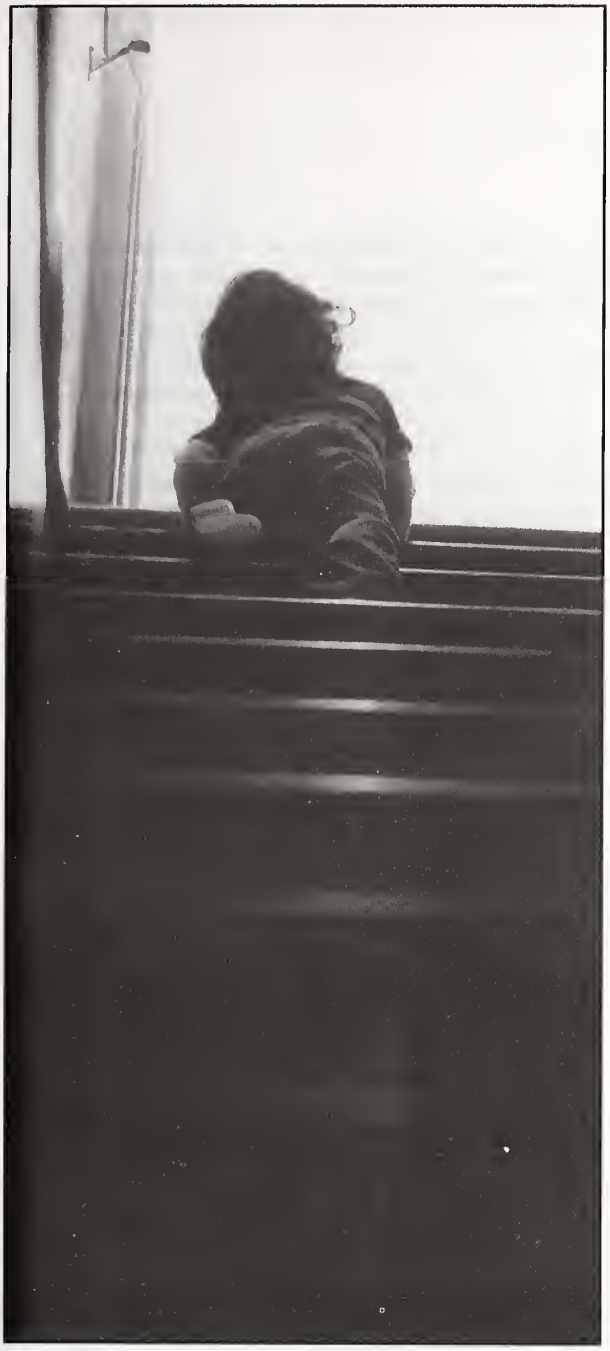
It was a holy moment for me, one who has lived little more than half Daddy's age. As I joined that "Happy Birthday" anthem, I resolved that I too can, by faith, be satisfied with the church as it will become.

Happy 100th birthday, Daddy.—*jlp*

February 27, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



Those of us who are fortunate enough to relate to small children regularly know the joy of sensing "in small things the beginning of infinite significance and the ultimate in the common and simple."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Donald R. Jacobs:
'You did not choose me; I chose you' 8

Randall J. Roth & Ryan Ahlgrim:
The top ten questions facing the church in the year 2050 9

India 1997 registration forms available from congregations 10

Divine cow-milking and psalm-like seeing:

Paying attention to the Word in the routine

We may not be able to bring the sacred and the profane together. But we could learn to pay attention to the ways in which the Word is among us, even in the midst of our day-to-day routines.

by Keith Graber Miller

Around the turn of the century, William James chronicled the multiple ways people encounter the divine by reading dozens of autobiographies, interviewing scores of people, and then weaving together from those narratives a provocative text titled *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* In one story, James quotes sailor Frank Bullen's autobiography, *With Christ at Sea.* James allows Bullen to describe, in his own words, a kind of religious conversion he experienced while on board his ship.

Bullen writes about a stiff wind and his crew's attempts to move north out of the bad weather. "Shortly after four bells we hauled down the flying-jib, and I sprang out astride the boom to furl it," he says. "I was sitting astride the boom when suddenly it gave way with me. The sails slipped through my fingers and I fell backwards, hanging head downwards over the seething tumult."

Bullen says, though, that while death was divided from him "by only a hair's breadth," he

FEB 26 '96

If we watch for it, if we live our lives with open hands and holy expectancy, we may encounter the divine Word in any situation into which we walk.

felt only high exultation in his certainty of eternal life. Then after a few seconds, Bullen's body reasserted itself, and with a "desperate gymnastic effort," he regained the boom. "How I furled the sail I don't know," he says, "but I sang at the utmost pitch of my voice praises to God that went pealing out over the dark waste of waters."

In another less dramatic but stranger account, James records the words of newly committed and perhaps overzealous Billy Bray, who experiences God not only in moments of trauma but with every step. "I can't help praising the Lord," says Bray. "As I go along the street, I lift up one foot, and it seems to say 'Glory'; and I lift up the other foot, and it seems to say 'Amen'; and so they keep up like that all the time I am walking."

Thanks be to God that most of us have feet with more vocal restraint. And fortunately, on a normal workday, few of us experience the adrenaline rush of full-faced ocean spray as we hang breathlessly near the jaws of the sea. For the most part, our lives are considerably more stable, comparatively more mundane, and consequently more routine. We sometimes speak about being "stuck in ruts" or being caught in "daily grinds."

And we also tend to compartmentalize our lives far more than did our ancestors, breaking them up into eight-hour shifts of work, domesticity, and sleep, with regularly scheduled units of religiosity. In contrast, some of the people groups before us lived more integrated lives. Native American peoples were less likely to separate out the natural from the supernatural. Hunting, planting, eating, dancing, celebrating, dying—all of life was infused with what we might consider religious elements. In a similar way, the Hebrew people wove together the natural with the supernatural, the sacred and the profane.

When our spiritual ancestor Moses heard his call from God, the call came out of flaming shrubbery. When the Word came to Moses, he was a burned-out fugitive tending his father-in-law Jethro's flocks. The job would prepare him for the assignment to which he was to devote himself—shepherding Yahweh's flock out of Egypt.

Lawrence Kushner writes in his book, *God Was in This Place and I, i Did Not Know,* that the burning bush was not a miracle: it was a test. God wanted to find out whether or not Moses could pay attention to something for more than a few minutes. When Moses did, God spoke. "The trick," says Kushner, "is to pay attention to what is going on around you long enough to behold the miracle without falling asleep. There is another world, right here within this one, whenever we pay attention."

It's not likely that we'll ever be able to fuse together the worlds of the sacred and profane, nor would that be desirable or necessary. For many of us, the Word comes to us in the context of authentic worship with other believers, in communal moments of what one early sociologist called "collective effervescence"—when we are animated by a common passion in our singing, playing, reading, and listening. But we could learn to pay attention to the ways in which the Word is among us, even in the midst of our day-to-day routines.

Rediscovering or reappropriating some sense of the Reformation-era notion of vocation—the conviction that we are serving God, whatever our calling.

In the New Testament, the sense of calling or vocation is consistently a calling to new life in Christ, not to a specific job or profession. All who are called to new life in Christ are expected to evidence that call regardless of

their occupation. But in the subsequent centuries, as Christianity spread across the empires, the meaning of vocation or calling became truncated, coming to refer only to those who entered religious orders and stripping other non-monastic involvements of their value.

In the 16th century, Martin Luther rejected this occupational double standard as well as his monastic vows, believing that, as one interpreter says, true faith needs to be "worked out in the difficult circumstances of marriage and ordinary life." Any station in which people could live honestly could be considered a divine vocation, Luther said. Such stations included those attached to the family—to be mother, wife, father, husband, child; those which were part of the economic order—shopkeeper, milkmaid, laborer; and those which belonged to political life—to be king, governor, or subject.

As Rupert Davies puts it, Luther believed all of these vocations are "masks" of God, faces through which God's work in human life "is both revealed and concealed." In other words, "Through those whom God calls, God [orders] the family, governs the state, and milks the cows" (*Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology,* 1983).

In my own discipline of teaching Bible and religion, it may be especially simple to make these connections. We work with "the Word" in all of its senses. We engage the biblical text, the collected stories of those who experienced God in significant ways and recorded those truths for future generations. We relate with the *living* Word, wrestling with students through our understandings and commitments to this one we call Christ. And we, like the Hebrews, are aware of the more ancient conviction that *all* words possess great power, taking on a life of their own beyond the control of the speaker, becoming words which are capable of cursing or blessing, tearing or mending, slashing or healing.

But for all of us, being aware of the mask of God we wear may make us more attentive to God's presence in our vocations.

Welcoming unplanned, unsolicited, and unexpected breaks in routine—cracks through which the sublime, divine Word may enter.

I'm a revoltingly organized person. Students who have seen my syllabi recognize this immediately: in each course the syllabus has a day-by-day listing of topics and readings, with reminders about when particular assignments are due. My office is perpetually neat and orderly, with every paper and book on its allotted shelf. I find the certainties of such an existence comforting. Vacations, when the routine is broken, are extraordinarily difficult for me because I'm not sure how the day is to be ordered.

But in spite of all that, I've recognized how much I delight in spontaneous breaks in the routine. One of the realities of teaching is that no matter how much we might seek to keep our "spaces" orderly, the necessity of pedagogical give-and-take allows for blessed disorder: the question that throws a wrench in a narratively arranged lecture but sheds greater light than our windy ruminations; the illness which prompts us to pause and recognize that we care for each other beyond the confines of the classroom; the gentle reminders after a lecture that not all people view the world as we do, and that those other perspectives need to be heard; the drop-by visits throughout the week in which students share their pain or pleasure, or discuss tentative plans for their uncertain futures.

Many of us receive energy from those with whom we work. Last summer I felt as though I needed another month before I would be ready to begin school, but that longing for more weeks evaporated when I saw students back again—hairful, hairless, bronzed, and ready to roll. Thank God we have the opportunity to interact zestily with these others whom we don't control—persons whose questions, actions, pains, and creativity break into our feeble attempts at order and speak more truth than all that we might have prepared.

I have experienced life at home in similar ways, especially with the ever-present reality of a four-year-old dynamo. Our son Niles has the uncanny ability of keeping us ever off-balance. Our deepest, most profound conversations usually happen at bedtime, when we read to Niles and talk with him about the day. One of the books from my childhood that I often read to him is titled *God Loves Me,* and I vividly remember the images from the time I was Niles' age.

One night several months ago while I was reading the book, Niles interrupted and said "Where is God?" Caught a bit off guard, I explained that God is sort of in the sky, and sort of in the beauty we see in the trees and

Seeing God in the mundane is not possible for us on our own. We need the help of others whose perspectives and visions can round out our own and improve our sight.

nature, and sort of in our hearts. That would satisfy him, I thought.

"Where are our hearts?" he asked next. I tried to explain that but didn't realize how difficult it would be to put it into language he would understand.

Then Niles asked a rich theological question: "Is Jesus still alive?" I told him that well, yes, he was; that he lived inside of all people who love God. Niles processed that for a moment and then said, "Did we eat him?" For a moment I thought of the experience of communion, when we speak about ingesting the body and blood of Christ as a reminder of Jesus' presence in our lives. But I simply said, "Well, no, there are other ways to get inside of us." And then he asked the most troubling theological question: "Does Jesus live in Barney?" Not the stuffed Barney dinosaur on his shelf, we decided, but maybe public television's big purple Barney.

Sometimes the Word comes to us in off-the-wall ways which break into our routines.

"There is another world, right here within this one . . . . The trick is to pay attention long enough to behold the miracle without falling asleep."

Learning to recognize the quiet gifts of God—the mysterious and tremendous moments God drops into our ordinary routines.

The psalmist understood what seeing in this vein meant: "The heavens declare God's glory, and the skies proclaim the work of the Lord's hands. Day after day they pour forth speech—even without words or language—and night after night they display knowledge" (Ps. 19:1-2).

As a child and then as an artist, Ann learned to see in ways I never did, and I am immensely grateful for what she has taught me during our marriage about *beholding:* to see the brilliance of sunlight radiating through the thin petal of a Caribbean canario flower; to see nuances of pinks and purples and reds in a bougainvillea; to see holiness in the glimmer of the moon across a pond; to see symmetry in shadows which betray forms; to see vibrant hues overlooked by the untrained eye; to see in the jumping of fish or the winging of geese a kind of silent elegance.

Those of us who are fortunate enough to relate to small children regularly know the joy of the first sighting of a woolly caterpillar, the initial glimpse of spring tulips, or the first recognition of the strange movements of arachnids. "Hey, Dad, did you know spiders walk like this?" Niles shouted the other day as he flailed his arms and legs across the floor.

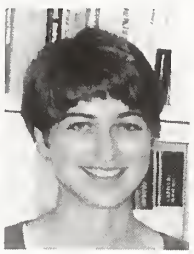
Such awe enables us, as Abraham Joshua Heschel writes, "to sense in small things the beginning of infinite significance, to sense the ultimate in the common and the simple, to feel in the rush of the passing the stillness of the eternal" (*The Wisdom of Heschel*, 1975).

If we watch for it, if we live our lives with open hands and holy expectancy, we may encounter the divine Word in any situation we walk into. May God grant us the ability to see God's work and God's Word with increasing clarity in the midst of the mundane and the profane. Such seeing is not possible on our own. But with the help of others whose perspectives and visions round out our own and improve our sight, we *can* see the threads of God woven into the fabric of our lives.

Keith Graber Miller is associate professor of Bible, religion, and philosophy at Goshen (Ind.) College. He also serves as an editorial consultant for Gospel Herald. *This article is adapted from a sermon he gave Sept. 17, 1995, at College Mennonite Church, where he is a member.*

"Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you."—Ps. 32:5-6a

Gospel Herald



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READERS SAY

How Can We Keep from Singing? (Jan. 16). The fact that most people responded to Marlene Kropf's survey by saying they would rather give up preaching than music is not only cause for dismay. It is also an explanation of the trend in the Mennonite Church to water down the truths of the Bible to conform to modern society and lifestyles.

Now I am not anti-music. I have been involved in church music since age 16 (I'm now 73). But as much as I have loved music and feel privileged to have participated in it over the years, the preaching and study of the Scriptures remains the basis of the theology of my life. It is my hope to never grow too old, mature, or sophisticated so that I cannot be challenged by a good sermon.

I am fortunate to worship in a church that is richly endowed with good musicians. I am even more fortunate to sit under a ministry that preaches the Bible in its purity and without apology. It is this preaching that goes with me as I leave a service.

Wilmer Oyer
Roanoke, Ill.

Once in a while I read something I wish I had written. Such as J. Denny Weaver's ***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** (Jan. 23). I for one am absolutely convinced a believers church theology needs to be articulated. The dogmatic formula of an apostate imperial cult was totally inadequate as witness to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. They always were alien, far, far from the simple discipleship language of the New Testament.

Today's hermeneutics teach us to be on the lookout for vested interests hidden in texts. This insight urgently needs to be brought to bear upon the dogma of Byzantium.

Once in a while I am invited to speak on peace issues to Christians of other backgrounds in Spain. Then I unapologetically teach the absolutely essential centrality of peace and nonviolence for understanding Jesus and the cross. It is not unusual to get an Acts 2 response: "Brother, what should we do?" To which, of course, the answer is: "Repent and believe the good news!" This message is not Mennonitism; it is faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

Our motivation for doing believers church theology dare not be to whip up a new reason for Mennonitism to exist, once the old cultural distinctives have faded away. Most Mennonites around the world today care nothing about ethnic Mennonitism anyway, even supposing they had heard of such a thing.

The only legitimate motivation for doing believers church theology is faithfulness to the still radical—and still barely understood—message of Jesus Christ. We need a new look at theology as Christians because, quite simply, we want to follow Jesus faithfully. And the results of our efforts must be accessible to all Christians, not just Mennonites.

Dennis Byler
Burgos, Spain

Which Way for Mennonite Theology? (Jan. 23). Mennonites have a problem with basic biblical truth. J. Denny Weaver says it's two lists. I say it's three: (1) knowing, (2) being, and (3) doing. Our problem is that we tend to move from number 1 to number 3 without giving number 2 much thought.

What I mean is that people do not seem to know who they are in Christ. I am appalled at the number of people trying to work their way to eternal life. But those redeemed by Christ are seated with him in heaven, a spiritual position, one that must come before doing. This is the place to begin discussion about peace issues—after one realizes who one is "in him."

If we adequately understood who we are, we would return to what the early church believed and experienced. They taught and preached the gospel, healed the sick, and cast out demons—just as Jesus did (Matt. 4:23-24).

Dean Hochstetler
Nappanee, Ind.

Which Way for Mennonite Theology? (Jan. 23). It is stressful for me to continually encounter Christian groups who feel their particular thrust is the "balanced" Christian theology: the Mennonites feel it is peace; the Pentecostals are sure it is walking in the power of the Spirit; the Reformed are confident of their election; the Lutherans certify it is faith alone in Christ alone; the Adventists boast it is all about obedi-

ence; the Baptists proclaim it is in the priesthood of the believer; and the Catholics and Orthodox know that it is all of these.

Do Mennonites really want to make the ethics of Jesus a centerpiece of their systematic theology? In the same issue in his editorial, ***'Dear God, I Make Too Much,'*** J. Lorne Peachey asks, "So what do we do with the tough words of Jesus about money?" His first point: "We must continue to wrestle with them."

The church (that is broader than Mennonite) is also wrestling with the ethics of Jesus. Nonviolence is hardly the whole of Jesus' ethics. In fact, I think we prefer to continue to "wrestle with them" while we imagine ourselves to be radicals. We prefer to "wrestle" and leave the living of the ethics of Jesus to religious orders.

I affirm recognizing the historic creeds as the core to the Mennonite theology. To overcome the sin of being "one more American denomination"—that is, to reach the unity of faith for which Paul and Jesus yearned—we must not crave to be unique in the family of God. We can bring our distinctive issues hammered out in the pain of Mennonite history to the unifying church. Our experiences can complement and build the witness of the whole gospel.

D. Richard Brooks
Klaipeda, Lithuania

The report, ***Virginia Takes Stand on Membership for Military Personnel*** . . . (Jan. 30) stopped me in my tracks. Had we finally found a way for our denomination and conferences to affirm specific beliefs while recognizing that being faithful may lead individual congregations in a different direction?

The attacks the following week (Feb. 6) about ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . (Jan. 9) suggest the answer may be "no." Like the Feb. 6 "Pointius' Puddle," we understand that the key to dealing with conflict is "achieving unity on the crucial matters and allowing diversity on those that aren't." The problem is, we *do* all tend to feel the important issues are those that matter to us.

David Kniss' comment in ***Casino Gambling Consultation*** . . . (Feb. 6) speaks to the same question. He says the issue of gambling isn't so simple when he has to talk with a church member about the struggles of unemployment. Isn't that what Jesus taught us so well? The important issues of the day begin to pale when we finally begin to care for the needs of the people around us.

Ron Byler
Philadelphia, Pa.

Virginia Takes a Stand . . . (Jan. 30). Your report on the Virginia Conference session on the peace issue frames very well the dilemma in which we find ourselves. The conference statement "does not

Promise Keepers and the men's movement

For me, the viewpoint expressed by Steve Kriss about Promise Keepers (Feb. 6) is valid, and the ones expressed by Ron and Arbutus Sider are not.

I disagree with the agenda of the feminists within the Mennonite church. Instead, I agree with the views of Elisabeth Elliot expressed in her book, *The Mark of a Man* (Revell). She rebuts the Siders' assertion that the word "head" means source rather than being a position of authority.

I chose to submit to my husband because I chose to submit to Christ.

Mary Hull Naumoff
Orrville, Ohio

I appreciated the tone and position of Ron and Arbutus Siders' articles, especially their biblical perspective on headship.

I am impressed with Promise Keepers' commitments to racial integration, to men befriending men (I had previously thought this was only a progressive agenda item), to men being present in families (a stroke against the powerful industry-consumption definitions of male identity). And I like the Promise Keeper's exhortation to leadership in the home.

But on this last item, I have one critical difference with Promise Keepers. Leadership is not tied to one parent or the other because of gender. Women and men lead, depending on the issue, skills, gifts, insight, etc. There has been a lack of recognition of the importance of good assertive leadership in the past generation. But I would hate to see a return to males only in the search for strong leadership.

Vernon K. Rempel
Lancaster, Pa.

Thanks for your articles focusing on the men's movements. I'll have to admit that I found myself searching for the continuation of the first article—it didn't seem finished. I'm looking forward to seeing the full text of the Siders' presentation.

I do take issue with the statement that "the movements seem to . . . totter on the edge of becoming mere reactions against the rightful dignity and equality that women have achieved in society." That is not what I have gained from Robert Bly. In a conversation with Bill Moyers, he observed that, in the face of the women's movement, men have become weak and ineffectual.

We do not need a world where, as in Lake Wobegon, "all the women are strong and all the men are good-looking." We need a world where both women and men are strong, with both practicing the mutual subordination that the Bible calls for. This is a message both the church and larger society need to hear.

Don Garber
Goshen, Ind.

Why did you put photos of Promise Keepers along with your front-page story about the *secular* men's movement that has nothing to do with Promise Keepers? In addition, your subtitle to the article on Promise Keepers implies that this movement is against the dignity and equality of women. Many of us have not found it to be so.

Steve Kriss and Ron and Arbutus Sider all gave excellent reports of Promise Keepers. It's unfortunate their stories were not accompanied by Promise Keepers photos.

Let's aim for accurate reporting and let the movements speak for themselves.

Glenn Wadel
Waynesboro, Pa.

endorse" accepting as members those who are currently in the military; holds that loyalty to the military oath is "incompatible" with discipleship; and encourages those who may be in the military to find ways to separate themselves from it.

At the same time, the conference wants to remain "in full fellowship" with those congregations that disagree. The resolution of this dilemma, as stated in the report, seems to be "continuing in mutually respectful dialogue." But a discerning dialogue requires a willingness to talk on both sides of the issue!

How are we to understand the words of Leslie Francisco that the Lord wants us "not to get side-tracked by some internal debate"? Or those of Greg Mayo that the discussion is "wearing me out"? Or Gerald Martin's assertion that his congregation "will not allow it to become an issue"?

Virginia Conference has begun a process of theological and ethical discernment that is very important. The issues are not simple. The process will take time and much effort, and at times it will be painful. But unless both sides see "peace" as a gospel issue, the process will have little integrity. The result will be what the Roman Catholics have dubbed "indifferentism."

C. Norman Kraus
Harrisonburg, Va.

I enjoyed reading some of the articles in the Jan. 30 issue of *Gospel Herald* concerning the tensions between the Mennonite church and its colleges. The Mennonite constituency has good reason to be suspicious of church colleges, for it can hardly be denied that the colleges have been a source of much of the social change in the wider Mennonite community.

This social change, however, is not an inherent effect of the church colleges. Evidently, you overlooked this point in writing ***The Mennonite College and Its Constituency*** when you state: "Colleges . . . by definition deal with the new." Whose definition is this? Certainly not Webster's!

Dealing with the new may be the norm in many schools, but it is in no way a definition of "college." Plenty of colleges are devoted to teaching and studying history—as opposed to studying, predicting, or manipulating our present and future (i.e., the new). Your suggestion that our colleges are somehow inherently linked to the new serves only to deepen the suspicion that much of the constituency has for academia.

John N. Yukich
Milan, Mich.

Two comments on ***Going Home Is the Most Difficult Cross-cultural Experience*** (Jan. 30). The author levied conclusions against "many" Mennonite congregations and a current trend in "many Mennonite congregations" on lack of support for Mennonite higher education. Where did this information come from? It may or may not be true, but there is no way to measure that.

With regard to the experience of returning home following several years in college, again it is hard to gauge the validity of that point, considering that the author has not attended his home congregation since his completion of school.

Dave Shalaway
Bally, Pa.

This letter comes as a gentle concern as you choose items to place in our official magazine.

Most of my ministry over the past 40 years has been in church planting programs. When letters and comments are expressed in our denominational periodical that do not fit with our church statements, new Christians in the church are confused.

One such item is ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . ("Mennoscope," Jan. 9). The implication of this promotion in *Gospel Herald* is that our denomination is giving support and approval to a lifestyle that we have officially stated we do not approve of.

I'm sure you eliminate many items that come across your desk that are not deemed helpful to our understanding of biblical ethics. Let me encourage you to cut out a few more.

Frank E. Nice
Baltimore, Md.

The briefest of the four letters you printed (Feb . 6) protesting the item ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . (Jan. 9) was longer and more space consuming than the news item itself. I continue to marvel at the extent that the very subject of homosexuality brings out instantaneous reactions of anger, fear, and odium.

For my spouse (who was not raised Mennonite), the continuing demonstration of this hatefulness prevents her from attending any Mennonite church. For my three sons, I can offer no defense as to why they should attend a Mennonite church, where the love of Christ obviously is not policy. I occasionally do manage to return to the pew, embarrassed and defensive, trying in vain to convince myself that things aren't as bad as they obviously are.

Greg Springer
Urbana, Ill.

I was surprised by the letters in the Feb. 6 issue criticizing *Gospel Herald's* publicizing (1) an event for gay and lesbian Mennonites and (2) the disciplining of a church leader.

To my thinking, both fit very well within the *Gospel Herald* mandate to "inform, inspire, and lead in analysis and discussion of decisions and issues facing the Mennonite Church." I hope you continue your work of informing us what is happening across the spectrum of Mennonite life. This includes some items which will bring us discomfort.

Karla Kauffman
Ft. Collins, Colo.

Letters from readers are welcome. Send them to "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com

Pontius' Puddle

How my God has met me (2):

'You did not choose me

Now and again, in a moment of prideful thinking, I say to myself, 'Wasn't I smart to make all these right decisions?' Then Jesus says, 'It was I who appointed you!'

by Donald R. Jacobs

It had been a fabulous week for the awe-stricken disciples. Jesus was welcomed into the city with shouts of "Hosanna," and his popularity was at an all-time high. The twelve disciples no doubt bathed in the glory of the moment—how good they must have felt because they had decided to follow Jesus. It was in that context that Jesus shared some very important information with his disciples.

Having referred to himself as the vine and the disciples as the branches, he surprised them by revealing a secret to them: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name" (John 15:16).

Jesus loves to surprise us. Life in him is one fresh surprise after another, and the joy of anticipation never fades. In my own life, one refrain has held true across numerous stages—*God grasped me and then slowly revealed his secrets to my grateful heart.*

It was Oct. 10, 1944, and I had just run down the iron steps in front of the administration building at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va., to attend the compulsory revival meetings led by John R. Mumaw. As I stepped on to the curb outside the chapel, I became acutely aware of the presence of Another. I was mystified. To this day I do not remember what Brother Mumaw preached about. Following the service, Lester Eshleman, probably noticing my bewilderment, took me into the side room of the old chapel. I gave my heart to the Lord. I had been running away from God, but he followed me and grasped me with both hands. I knew in my spirit that I was captured.

The author, Donald R. Jacobs, at work while on assignment in Kenya.

After that initial encounter I knew that I would never be the same. It is true that I chose Jesus, but in hindsight I see that he chose me. I had only to bend my stiff neck and he had me.

In the fall of 1945, Anna Ruth Charles, a remarkable woman from Lancaster, Pa., registered for New Testament Greek. In a weak moment I had done the same. I was captured. It took five more years before we were married, but I knew that God made that decision for me and then slowly but surely surprised me with his marvelous choice. Even now my heart almost explodes when I consider God's goodness.

Two years later, during the summer of 1946, God put it into the heart of Richard Detweiler to ask me to go with him on a Virginia Mission Board trip to Kentucky to scout out a new area to establish a mission. I did not choose Richard to be my mentor; God did. That two-month assignment resulted in my staying two years in rural Appalachia. There the basic groundwork was laid in my life for a missionary career. I did not choose a missionary career; God chose that for me.

Later, Anna Ruth and I found ourselves in a village on the shores of Lake Victoria in the heart of Africa. I did not choose Africa. I had no more interest in Africa than I did in Antarctica —maybe less. But it was in Africa, where a great awakening was sweeping the land, that I found full release in my spirit to live in the fullness of the Spirit and in daily cleansing. I was so legalistic and stiff-necked that the Lord plunked me down in a stressful environment and there spoke peace to my heart.

I was not at all interested in that revival. It was too pietistic and simplistic for me. I had moved beyond such things. But again, I did not choose to be stricken, to be broken in spirit, or to cry out to the Lord for cleansing and filling, though I had been a Christian for several years. I did not choose this profound shaking in my soul. That was all the Lord's doing.

These days, I have a compelling desire to close the doors about me and find peace and solace in our home in Landisville, Pa. I want to watch the seasons in all their glory, to plant a few tomatoes, to count every bird which lands on our little plot or flies overhead, and to play at least two sets of tennis with Anna Ruth every day. I want to build furniture, carve birds, sit by the fire, kick off my shoes, and read until my heart's content.

But Anna Ruth and I find ourselves in China, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and all over the place, trying to communicate in many strange cultures, sleeping in strange beds, getting bit by innumerable bugs, eating foods that we've never heard of. I did not choose this life; God

I chose you'

did, and slowly revealed his secrets to my heart.

I may not gloss over the excruciatingly painful surprises: sickness, broken dreams, inadequacies, hurtful disappointments and rejection, sleepless nights, dangers, hard work, difficult circumstances. Can we expect only pleasant things from the Lord and not the heartrending, undesirable things?

Now and again, in a moment of prideful thinking, I sigh and say to myself, "Wasn't I smart to make all the right decisions?" Then Jesus appears to me in all his grace and whispers to me something which I always knew. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last."

The apostle Paul put it in a slightly different way. In writing to the Philippians, he said that he was apprehended by Christ—grasped by him. When he was breathing out threats against the believers on the way to Damascus to torture and kill as many as he could, he met Jesus Christ. Jesus grasped him. Paul then, reflecting on his life, said, "I am trying to grasp the one who grasped me."

I stand in the tradition of Saul of Tarsus. As I look back over my life since May 1945, I admit with a bit of an inward chuckle, "Really, now. I did not choose him or what he brought into my life. I would have made a royal mess of the whole thing. He chose me and brought into my life that which will glorify him."

Donald R. Jacobs is executive director of Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation, a ministry to Mennonite leaders in emerging churches around the world. He attends Chestnut Hill Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa. This article was adapted from a sermon he gave at Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Va., last October during homecoming weekend.

The top 10 questions that may face the Mennonite church in the year 2050

10 What do we do about the image problem—that old-fashioned group that still drives gas-powered automobiles?

9 Can the church survive the mass exodus to farms and small towns from the cities?

8 How do we overcome prejudice in the church toward people from other planets?

7 What plans does the church have to combat the ongoing abuse of the world's most addictive drug: white sugar?

6 Does understanding dolphin and chimpanzee speech mean putting resources into a translation of the Bible for them?

5 How do we solve the growing trend for money to leave the local congregation and go to denominational agencies?

4 If time travel really becomes possible, should Mennonite historians consider rescuing Felix Manz from drowning?

3 With the General Board now in Kenya, are the needs of minority North Americans being met?

2 After 60 years of conference mergers, will the East Coast MCs and GCs finally integrate?

1 What do we do with 130-year-old pastors who refuse to retire?

—Randall J. Roth and Ryan Ahlgrim

India 1997 plans progress:
Mennonite World Conference registration forms available

Kitchener, Ont.—With India 1997 less than a year away, registration materials and information are now available to congregations and individuals from Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

"Assembly Gathered," the conference portion of MWC's 13th world assembly, will be held in Calcutta Jan. 6-12. Before and after the conference, "Assembly Scattered" offers participants a chance to visit Christians in India and neighboring countries. Groups of visitors will "scatter" to various locations throughout India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, hosted by local Christians and accompanied by English-speaking guides.

Host for MWC Assembly 13 will be the Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India. It will be held at the St. Thomas School in Calcutta.

MWC encourages each North American and Brethren in Christ congregation to choose two members to represent them at India 1997. Congregations are also encouraged to contribute to the MWC travel fund that enables Third World churches to send representatives who would otherwise be unable to participate. The estimated cost per person is $3,000 (U.S.).

Solidarity across national lines. "Hear What the Spirit Is Saying to the Churches" is the theme for India 1997. Activities during the conference include plenary sessions, seminars, special programming for children and youth, and daily worship and Bible study. Afternoon tours of cultural and historic sites in Calcutta will also be offered, and a "Global Church Village" will feature booths and presentations from churches on every continent.

"I hope that India 1997 helps in both formation and transformation and moves us all a step closer to developing Anabaptist identity, accountability, and solidarity across national boundaries," says Larry Miller, executive secretary of MWC. "The church is not really church until it is local *and* global."

भारत
1997

Mennonite World Conference logo in Hindi

Registration forms have been mailed to all North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations. For more information and registration, interested persons can contact their pastors or the MWC office at 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1; phone 519 571-0060.—*taken from MWC material*

Mennonite Mutual Aid reports record growth

Goshen, Ind. (MMA)—Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) recorded growth in total assets of 21.9 percent in 1995, the fastest rate of growth in the recent history of the organization.

Total assets jumped $123 million—from $562 million at the end of 1994 to $685 million in 1995. Total equity increased by $7.2 million. Overall MMA membership increased to approximately 72,000, up from 70,000 one year ago.

MMA projects total assets will rise to about $785 million by the end of 1996 and to approximately $1 billion in 1998.

"Results for 1995 are indeed gratifying as more and more of our constituency take advantage of MMA's fraternal programs as well as participate in our insurance and financial service plans," says Howard L. Brenneman, MMA president.

Every area of MMA recorded gains in 1995, but the most growth has occurred in MMA Praxis Mutual Funds, where assets vaulted nearly 150 percent. The MMA Praxis Growth Fund experienced a return of 33.3 percent in 1995, and the MMA Praxis Intermediate Income Fund returned 17.5 percent. These rates of return put both funds among the top 1995 performers of socially responsible mutual funds.

Fraternal programs increase. The use of MMA's fraternal benefit programs continued their upward pace in 1995, rising from $2.3 million in 1994 to $2.8 million in 1995. The largest fraternal benefit program, the Sharing Funds, provided more than $1.6 million in matching grants to meet needs in local congregations. An additional $622,000 was made available to fraternal programs following a 1995 decision by the board of directors to tithe the earnings of all MMA corporations.

MMA paid nearly $20 million in medical bills for members of health insurance plans during 1995.

—*Steve Bowers*

"Meating" needs through canning. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—A prisoner at the Yegorvesk Remand Center, 56 miles southeast of Moscow, helps unload cans of beef from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). These cans are products of MCC's canner, the only portable meat canner in the United States. It produces a quarter-million cans of beef, chicken, pork, and broth yearly. "Together We Can," a video now available from MCC, uses historical footage to provide an overview of the beginning of the canning project fifty years ago when some dismissed it as a "crazy idea."

Heges return to Ethiopia to research growth

Nathan and Arlene Hege are researching the history of the Mennonite Church in Ethiopia. This African church has spread rapidly in the past twenty years—from 2,000 members in 1974 to about 83,000 members today, church leaders say.

Salunga, Pa. (EMM)—Boarding a ship in New York Harbor in 1950, Arlene Landis and Nathan Hege left for mission assignments in Ethiopia.

On Jan. 17, forty-five years later, they boarded a plane for a follow-up assignment.

When Nathan and Arlene left in 1950, they planned to spend at least five years teaching English and doing evangelism in Bedeno and other villages outside the capital, Addis Ababa. They ended up getting married in Ethiopia and serving there 24 years.

'We'll notice a lot of changes.' This time, however, they plan to spend only four months there. Their assignment is to research and write the 50-year history of the Meserete Kristos Church—the Mennonite Church in Ethiopia. The writing project is sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) at the request of the Ethiopian church.

Arlene and Nathan were in their early twenties when they left in 1950. After eight months of language school, they were married. The Heges then helped to establish an elementary school and taught Bible classes in Bedeno, a rural village about 350 miles from Addis Ababa. After a furlough and four children, they served as elementary and high school teachers, translated and produced Christian literature into Amharic, wrote several short books, and assisted in planting churches in various regions. They returned to the United States in 1974, and Nathan worked at EMM in Salunga and served as a bishop in the Lancaster Conference while Arlene worked at Provident Bookstores.

"It's been 21 years since we've left our assignment there, so we'll notice a lot of changes," says Nathan. "The biggest one is probably the church growth."

When the Heges left Ethiopia in 1974, membership of the Meserete Kristos Church stood at about 2,000 members in 13 congregations. In 1982, when the church was forced to begin meeting "underground" in private homes because of communist rule, church leaders reported a membership of 5,000.

When the church emerged to hold its first public services after the overthrow of the communist government in 1991, membership totaled 50,000 in 53 churches. Today Ethiopian leaders report a total of 83,000 members.

Uncovering personal testimonies. "We especially are interested in these house churches and the way the church spread so rapidly amid the restrictions," Nathan says. The Heges also hope to uncover personal testimonies of church leaders who were persecuted and an Ethiopian perspective on the transfer of church leadership from mission workers to nationals.

The biggest challenge to their present assignment will be to "get the whole scope of the history when there are few documents available," Nathan says. Their research will rely mainly on personal interviews.

To get a head-start, Nathan and Arlene have spent the past several months interviewing former missionaries to Ethiopia and Ethiopians who live in the United States. They have a rough draft of the first two chapters written.

"We hope to trace the start of the church and find how God used the missionaries," Nathan says. "And how he moved even in spite of us," he adds with a smile.—*Julie Hershey*

Masters in education program begins at EMU

Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)—The first class of the master of arts in education degree at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) began in January.

The third graduate program at EMU (other than seminary) has a charter group of 17 students, all with classroom experience.

"They're not all coming with the same perspective—or even the same geographic area," says Mark A. Hogan, director of the new program and associate professor of education at EMU. Beyond local residents, one person commutes from Pennsylvania, another is from Richmond, Va., while several others hail from Warren County, Va.

The non-traditional program has been in the planning stages for seven years. Students don't have to leave their present jobs to enroll in the 36 semester-hour program. The first class being offered, "Conflict Resolution in Educational Settings," is held five Fridays and Saturdays until March.

The 10 semester-hour core program required of all students stresses peace and justice issues in education and social-ethical concerns. Students then branch out into one of five tracks of specialized study.

The program is completely funded through student tuition, but Hogan says that a long-range goal is to obtain grants and endowments "to cover some extras, including scholarships for graduate assistantships and an international scholars program."

Worker finds warmth in Mongolian climate

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—When Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) worker Laura Schlabach first set foot in Mongolia in December 1993, the capital city of Ulaanbaatar overwhelmed her senses.

Smoke from the city's heat and power plant blanketed the city of a half-million people. Schlabach sought refuge from 5-degree temperatures, becoming disheartened when her driver told her, "Today is a warm day."

Temperatures in the east Asian nation have fallen as low as 28 degrees below zero during Schlabach's tenure. But in this harsh physical environment, Schlabach has seen Mongolians warm to the Christian message since the borders opened up following the 1991 collapse of the former Soviet Union.

Growing in depth. "For a while, the numbers seemed to increase very rapidly. Now we're seeing the numbers plateau and level off some," she says. "The church has experienced growth in numbers; now is the time for growth in depth."

In a few years, the Mongolian church has grown to about 3,700 believers, most connected with about 30 congregations in Ulaanbaatar but also reaching into eight Mongolian provinces.

"There were many Christians who rushed into Mongolia to host programs," says Dale Schumm, MBM director for Asia and the Middle East. "But we thought the way to go into Mongolia was in a united way." So MBM joined a coalition of 12 "broadly evangelical" international mission agencies to form Joint Cooperative Services (JCS), a development agency.

'This is where God wants me.' The Mongolian government, which bars proselytization by missionaries, recognized JCS International in March 1993. A few months later, Schlabach became its finance director.

Mennonites in North America soon will provide JCS International help of another sort. In 1996 Mennonite Economic Development Associates members will come to a town west of Ulaanbaatar, as consultants in setting up a sawmill.

As Schlabach wrestles with the physical environment in Mongolia, she finds herself not so much winning a battle as learning to see it with new eyes.

"I know this is where God wants me. I just have that peace and that assurance," says Schlabach.—*Tom Price*

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MMA

• **MBCM donations increase.** Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries (MBCM) received $17,000 more in the 1995-96 fiscal year than the year before. In 1991, the General Board launched a five-year strategy to increase by 50 percent the "offering plate dollars" that congregations donate to MBCM. Although not as successful as intended, "this small but significant increase will enable us to continue staffing in evangelism and church growth," says Everett J. Thomas, MBCM executive secretary. The MBCM board meets March 15-16 and will determine whether to permanently hire a staff person for evangelism.

• **Missionary transitions:**

Elaine Kauffman has returned to the U.S. after 22 years in Brazil with Mennonite Board of Missions.

Marilyn Metzler arrived in the U.S. Jan. 19 after three years in Somalia and Djibouti with EMM. Her address is RR2, Box 135, Springville, AL 35146.

Ken and Linda Renno left Jan. 2 for language school in Guatemala until August 1996. They will then spend three years in Peru with EMM.

• **Coming events:**

"Mennonite Quilts of Lancaster County," a collection of antique quilts, photographs, and artifacts, People's Place Quilt Museum, Intercourse, Pa., March 8-Nov. 12. Exhibit provides account of lives of Mennonite quilters 1855-1935. More information available from 717 768-7171.

Conflict in the Church seminar, First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn., March 16. Sponsored by Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. Registration and information available from 708 627-5310.

Mennonite Health Assembly, annual conference for Anabaptist-related health professionals, Schaumbuerg, Ill., March 21-24. "Caring and Healing in Our Fragmented Worlds" is the theme. Speakers include Martin Marty, Peggy Way, David Edelberg, and Janice Yordy Sutter. Registration deadline is Feb. 26. Information and registration available from Dean Preheim-Bartel at 800 348-7468.

Victim-offender reconciliation program training seminar, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College, April 10-12. Includes 24 hours of interactive instruction on how to initiate and operate a church-based program. Contact Elaine Enns at 800 909-VORP.

Church leaders retreat, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., April 26-28. Sponsored by the Lancaster (Pa.) Conference leadership council. John Esau will speak on the theme "Ministerial Leadership for the 21st Century: An Introductory Discussion of Themes in Mennonite Ministerial Polity."

Hispanic Anabaptist consultation of North America, Miami, Fla., May 2-4. "Unidad y Renovación Anabautista" is the theme. Speakers include Gamliel Falla, Samuel Lopez, Sam Resendez, Jody Miller Shearer, and Frantz S. Iago-Peretz. Sponsored by the peace and justice ministries of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Information available from Debra Gingerich at 717 859-3889.

Young adult retreat, "Building Networks of Support," Chicago, Ill., May 9-11. Sponsored by the Young Adult Network and Young Adult Reference Council. Speakers include Ken Hawkley and Beryl Jantzi. Registration deadline is April 31. More information available from Wes Bontreger at 219 862-2595 or Dawn Ranck at 687-7910.

Retreat for families coping with mental illness, Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich., May 10-12. Resource people include Carla Edelman, Jewel Martin, Jim Kinsey, and Sharon Yoder. Sponsored in part by Mennonite Mutual Aid. Registration deadline in April 15. Contact MMA advocacy department at 800 348-7468.

Correction: The dates for the western meeting of the retreat for pastors of larger churches are Sept. 9-11. The event includes Mennonite Brethren participants.

• **Job openings:**

Dietetic assistant, Greencroft, Goshen, Ind. Full or part-time position includes completing nutritional assessments and care plans. Must be a registered dietitian or certified dietary manager. Qualifications include organizational and clinical skills and computer experience. More information from 219 537-4029.

Kitchen supervisor, Greencroft, Goshen, Ind. Responsibilities include supervising food production. Qualifications include previous food service management or supervisory experience. More information from 219 537-4029.

Staff positions, Hesed House, Goshen, Ind. Part-time executive director and full-time live-in house parent for this sheltering home for teen mothers. More information available from 219 533-2208, or send résumé to PO Box 306, Goshen, IN 46527.

• **Change of address:**

Nancy and Robert Martin, 132 N. Ann St., Lancaster, PA 17602.

Leaving with prayers and blessing. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Eastern Mennonite Missions president Richard Showalter (left) and interim Discipleship Ministries director Dan Hoellwarth (right) offer a prayer of blessing for Galen and Marie Burkholder. Galen served as director of Discipleship Ministries and is now pursuing the development of an international discipleship training network. "It is my growing conviction that a truly international network of discipleship training and mission programs for young adults will have the greatest freedom to develop under an international leadership team rather than under the umbrella of one specific mission agency," Burkholder says. The French Mennonite Church is proposing the development of such a training and mission program later this year.

NEW MEMBERS

Acts Covenant Fellowship, Lancaster, Pa.: John Dienner, Rose Dienner, Vicki Groff, Jeremy Harder, Dustin Sauder, Janelle Shantz, Theda Good, Naomi Paine, Anne Gingerich, Jay Shertzer, Ellie Newswanger, Josh Boyd, Lisa Carrillo, Steve Eikenberry, Josh Gibbel, Derartu Kilifa, Fedisa Kilifa, Rick Rutter, Nathan Smoker, Kyle Smoker, Teresa Stoltzfoos, Sheila Stauffer, Gerry Stauffer, and Travis Yoder.

Berkey Avenue, Goshen, Ind.: Deirdre Schrock Albrecht, Tom Albrecht, Brenda J. Grimes, Daniel B. Grimes, Dale Shenk, Patricia Shenk, and Heidi Siemens.

Kaufman, Hollsopple, Pa.: DeWayne Werts and Elva Werts.

Norma, N.J.: Beverly Hobert, Elbert and Yvette Johnson, Terrie Scaruzzi, and Tim Schultz.

Pasadena, Calif.: Paul Childs, Jan Harmon, Paulette Hunt, Kathleen Klompien, Dave Lehman, Kimberly Medendorp, Melba Moore, Karen Sayer, Julie Sorensen, Gloria Newton, and Bert Newton.

Plains, Hatfield, Pa.: Brian Brunk, Henry Dyck, Jim King, Barb Libby, and Don Libby.

Pleasant View, Goshen, Ind.: Amy Bowen, Jevon Brenneman, Ryan Field, Joel Graber, Jennifer Liechty, and Sam Nice.

Whitestone, Hesston, Kan.: Ivan and Twyla White, Mary Smith, and Allen and Esther White.

BIRTHS

Bergey, Lori J. Gross and David L., Perkasie, Pa., Abigail Joy (second child), Feb. 2.

Browning: Kathy Nafziger and Scott, Fisher, Ill., Samantha Jo (third child), Jan. 19.

Cabezas, Regina Kauffman and Roberto, Lancaster, Pa., Robert Anthony (third child), Jan. 29.

Erb, Sandy Lennox and Murray, Tavistock, Ont., Justin Murray (third child), Jan. 31.

Frederick, Sherri Blosser and Brian, Leetonia, Ohio, Brianne Noelle (second child), Feb. 6.

Gross, Joyce Brenneman and Douglas, Nampa, Idaho, Hannah Joy (second child), Jan. 1.

Hall, Penny and Michael, Berlin, Ohio, Elijah Seth (second child), Feb. 4.

Kennell, Mary Nofsinger and Roger L., Roanoke, Ill., Kathryn Ruth (fourth child), Jan. 18.

Longenecker, Jewel Gingerich and Fred, Iowa City, Iowa, Jenae Lin (first child), Feb. 5.

Mast, Rhonda Nixon and Ivan, Apple Creek, Ohio, Ashley Marie (first child), Jan. 24.

Mullet, Darlene Gerber and Mel, Sarasota, Fla., Melody Tiana (second child), Jan. 26.

Selzer, Dana Jackson and Jeff, Goshen, Ind., Quintin Alan (first child), Dec. 22.

MARRIAGES

Bechtel-Halcomb: Charity Bechtel, Lexington, Ky. (North Goshen), and David Halcomb, Butler, Ky. (United Methodist), Dec. 16.

Immel-Ramseyer: Michonda Immel, Apple Creek, Ohio (Pleasant View), and Chad Ramseyer, Sterling, Ohio (Crown Hill), Dec. 23, by John M. Miller and Todd Martin.

Moyer-Roth: Jeffrey Moyer, Kitchener, Ont. (First), and Nadine Roth, Kitchener, Ont. (Nith Valley), Feb. 3, by Brice Balmer and Harold Schilk.

DEATHS

Bishop, Paul B., 76, Telford, Pa. Born: Dec. 7, 1919, Souderton, Pa., to Melvin and Margaret Benner Bishop. Died: Feb. 2, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Muriel Swartz Bishop: children: Rebecca Hendricks, Donna Bluemink, Paul Jonathan, David Kent, Alexander Micah; brother and sisters: Claude, Sadie Landis, Elaine; 18 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Nicole Bishop (daughter). Funeral and burial: Feb. 4, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by Truman H. Brunk, Jr., and David A. Stevens.

Boll, David O., 89, Manheim, Pa. Born: Aug. 20, 1906, Manheim, Pa., to Joseph A. and Martha Oberholtzer Boll. Died: Feb. 1, 1996, Manheim, Pa. Survivors—wife: Edna Moyer Boll; children: Clarence M., Eugene M., David, Jr., Dorothy A. Witmer, Velma B. Schnupp, Marian R. Metzler; brother: John H.; 23 grandchildren, 48 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Feb. 5, Hernley Mennonite Church, by George M. Hurst, Dale Schnupp, and Jay M. Peters.

Gouldey, Donald R., Sr., 62, Elroy, Pa. Born: Aug. 30, 1933, Creamery, Pa., to Isaiah and Mae Rader Gouldey. Died: Jan. 21, 1996, Elroy, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Patricia A. Fisher Gouldey; children: Donald R., Jr., Bruce W., Gayle Hoffman, Joanne Spotts; brothers and sisters: Kenneth, Wesley, Merill, Ethel Bishop, Ruth Wilson, Gladys France; 8 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Congregational membership: Spring Mount Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: Jan. 24, Lower Skippack Mennonite Church, by Ron Blough.

Harper, Leah Lichty, 94, St. Jacobs, Ont. Born: Dec. 24, 1901, St. Agatha, Ont., to John and Annie Kropf Lichty. Died: Feb. 5, 1996, St. Jacobs, Ont. Survivors—children: Harold, Helen Bardon, Irene Dernesch, Jan Perrin; 17 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Earl Harper (husband), Robert (son), and Gladys Richman and Ruth Richman (daughters). Funeral: Feb. 7, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel and Phyllis Tribby. Burial: Memory Gardens Cemetery.

Hershey, Elmer S., 89, Lititz, Pa. Born: Dec. 9, 1906, Lititz, Pa., to Amos and Annie Shissler Hershey. Died: Feb. 4, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of cardiac arrest. Survivors—son: Dale H.; sister: Ann Batchelor. Predeceased by: Margie Hess Hershey (wife). Funeral: Feb. 7, Lititz Mennonite Church, by J. Clair Hollinger, Dennis Ernest, Donald Good, and Jacob Frederick. Burial: Hess Mennonite Cemetery.

Hess, John Henry, Jr., 53, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: July 16, 1942, Lancaster, Pa., to John and Elsie Weaver Hess, Sr. Died: Jan. 15, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Rhoda Short Hess; brother and sister: P. Bruce, Tina H. Glanzer. Funeral: Jan. 17, Park View Mennonite Church, by Owen Burkholder. Cremated.

Johnson, Elmer R., 80, Bloomfield, Mont. Born: Sept. 6, 1915, Fergus Falls, Minn., to George and Ida Holdeman Johnson. Died: Feb. 3, 1996, Glendive, Mont. Survivors—wife: Mildred Hostetler Johnson; children: Roy, Mervin, Bob, George, Sue Riley, Betty Senner, Marie Gingerich; brothers and sisters: Ralph, Earl, Kenny, Fay, Alice Danielson, Marie, Grace Shantz; 17 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Feb. 7, Red Top Mennonite Church, by Fred Kanagy and Pat McFarren.

King, Edna Matilda, 77, Iowa City, Iowa. Born: Feb. 13,1918, Johnson County, Iowa, to Alpha and Blanche Yoder King. Died: Jan. 28, 1996, Iowa City, Iowa, of a stroke. Survivor—sister: Beulah "Bea" Koch. Funeral: Feb. 2, First Mennonite Church of Iowa City, by Firman Gingerich and Diane Zaerr. Burial: West Union Mennonite Cemetery.

Lehman, Esther Miller Nissley, 80, Lancaster, Pa. Born: March 4, 1915, Conoy Twp., Pa., to Reuben Z. and Lizzie E. Brubaker Miller. Died: Jan. 23, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—sons: John M., J. Marlin, Kenneth M.; foster daughters: Helena Rychener, Josephine Peters; stepdaughters: Lois Schwanger, Helen Keener; brothers and sister: Jonas, Alvin, Kraybill, John, Lois Hoffer. Predeceased by: Wayne P. Lehman (second husband) and Paul E. Nissley (first husband). Funeral: Jan. 27, Elizabethtown Mennonite Church, by Richard H. Frank and Walter L. Keener. Burial: Good's Mennonite Cemetery.

Litwiller, Fannie Sutter, 94, Hopedale, Ill. Born: Jan. 8, 1902, Pekin, Ill., to Christian and Idella Miller Sutter. Died: Jan. 31, 1996, Hopedale, Ill. Survivors—children: Lyle, Donald, Leo, Eileen Bennet, Lola Dickey, Velma Cremeens, Velora Pickens; brother and sisters: Clayton Sutter, Carrie Hostetler, Bessie Oyer, Minnie Sutter; 18 grandchildren, 31 great-grandchildren,

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8 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Eli Litwiller (husband), a daughter and an infant son. Funeral and burial: Feb. 2, Hopedale Mennonite Church, by H. James Smith and Michael Knowles.

Miller, Albert Wolf, 73, Akron, Pa. Born: March 18, 1922, Akron, Pa., to Orie O. and Elta Wolf Miller. Died: Jan. 28, 1996, Akron, Pa. Survivors—wife: Esther Lehman Miller; children: Edward L., Jan L., Jill Frey, Connie L.; brothers: John W., Robert W.; 10 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral and burial: Jan. 31, Akron Mennonite Church, by Urbane Peachey and Beryl Jantzi.

Miller, Anna, 95, Bristol, Ind. Born: May 13, 1900, LaGrange County, Ind., to Ben and Susan Weirich Miller. Died: Jan. 18, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivor—sister: Orpha Getz. Congregational membership: Pleasant View Mennonite Church. Funeral: Jan. 20, Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, by Ronald Diener. Burial: Shore Cemetery.

Myers, Warren C., 75, Goshen, Ind. Born: May 13, 1920, St. Joseph County, Ind., to Aaron and Clara Weldy Myers. Died: Jan. 16, 1996, Millersburg, Ind., in a traffic accident. Survivors—wife: Eva Pauline Lehman Myers; children: Dennis, Sharon Birkey, Glenda Ascencio, foster son: Harold E. Mumaw; brothers and sisters: Kenneth, Roscoe, Lowell, Robert, Bertha Martin, Maxine Newcomer; 8 grandchildren, one great-grandchild, 3 foster grandchildren, 6 foster great-grandchildren, one foster great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Kenton Myers (son). Funeral and burial: Jan. 19, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, by Lloyd L. Miller.

Nyce, Harold C., 66, Harleysville, Pa. Born: Nov. 19, 1929, Harleysville, Pa., to Edwin and Lizzie Clemens Nyce. Died: Jan. 31, 1996, Harleysville, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Lorene Detwiler Nyce; children: Philip, Mark, Kathy Keech, Cindy Kauffmann, Mary Roth; brothers: Cleon, Walter; 9 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Spring Mount Mennonite Church. Funeral: Feb. 4, Towamencin Mennonite Church, by Ron Blough and Randall Roth. Burial: Salford Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Peachey, Rodney A., 33, Wolcottville, Ind. Born: Jan. 15, 1963, Lewistown, Pa., to Robert and Violet Harshberger Peachey. Died: Jan. 22, 1996, LaGrange, Ind. Survivors—parents; sister: Pam Vail; grandmother: Viola Harshberger. Funeral: Jan. 25, Pleasant View Mennonite Church, by Ron Diener and Norman Maust. Burial: Miller Eight Square Cemetery.

Rowe, Mary G. Fazenbaker, 89, Hollsopple, Pa. Born: Jan. 13, 1907, Addison, Pa., to Walter and Donna Mitchell Fazenbaker. Died: Jan. 26, 1996, Knoxville, Tenn., of cancer. Survivors—children: Judson Shaffer, Walter Shaffer, David Rowe; sister: Naomi Collins; 11 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Thomas (son). Funeral: Jan. 31, Kaufman Mennonite Church, by Donald D. Sharp. Burial: Addison Cemetery.

Sommer, Rose Mae, 88, Kidron, Ohio. Born: May 30, 1907, Kidron, Ohio, to Jacob and Anna Moser Sommer. Died: Feb. 8, 1996, Canton, Ohio, of a heart attack. Burial: Kidron Mennonite Church Cemetery, by Herman Myers and Lowell Gerber.

Teat, Myra Louise Hostetler, 39, Sarasota, Fla. Born: May 13, 1956, Millersburg, Ohio, to Leon and Edna Hostetler. Died: Feb. 3, 1996, Sarasota, Fla., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Rod Teat; brothers and sister: Lynn and Dale Hostetler, Jean Seitz. Congregational membership: Bay Shore Mennonite Church. Funeral: Feb. 7, Wiegand Brothers Funeral Home, by J. D. Hamel. Burial: Palms Memorial Park.

Walters, Mildred J. Zook, 80, Belleville, Pa. Born: July 24, 1915, Lancaster County, Pa., to John L. and Pamelia Kanagy Zook. Died: Feb. 4, 1996, Lewistown, Pa. Survivors—children: Helen Seaholtz, Robert R., Leroy J., Delores Kanagy, Richard J.; 14 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Clarence O. Walters (husband) and Fred L. (son). Funeral and burial: Feb. 7, Allenville Mennonite Church, by Philip Barr.

Wolgemuth, Violet Rohrer, 93, Mount Joy, Pa. Born: Oct. 6, 1902, Lancaster, Pa., to Witmer B. and Emma Nissley Rohrer. Died: Feb. 6, 1996, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—husband: Daniel M. Wolgemuth; sons: Luke, Elton, James, and David Bomberger; stepchildren: D. Jay and Donald H. Wolgemuth; 12 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, 4 step-grandchildren, 6 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elam Bomberger (first husband). Congregational membership: Mount Joy Mennonite Church. Funeral: Feb. 10, Landis Homes Retirement Community, by Joe Sherer, Donald Good, and Janet Peifer. Burial: Henry Eberle Cemetery.

Workers begin assignments. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Forty-two workers participated in orientation at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters here Jan. 10-19. Fifteen of them are affiliated with the Mennonite Church. Each year some 475 workers begin MCC terms.

Front row (left to right): Ruth Martin of New Hamburg, Ont., to New Hamburg as coordinating manager of thrift store; Susan Classen of Springfield, Ohio, to Nicaragua as church worker; Rachel Miller of Akron, Pa., to Akron as manager of Selfhelp store; Fay Brenneman of Palmer Lake, Colo., to Indonesia as country co-representative and community development worker; Donna Roggie of Akron, Pa., to Akron as financial services clerk; Anita Bohn of Newton, Kan., to Kingston, Jamaica, at Jamaica Theological Seminary.

Second row: Jonathan Penner of Akron, Pa., to Akron as packing clerk; Carl and Marcia Shantz of Didsbury, Alta., to Akron as shipping clerk and secretary at Selfhelp; Bertha Toevs of Newton, Kan., to Akron as puller at Selfhelp; Thaddeus Hostetler of Portland, Ore., to Hanoi, Vietnam, as business consultant; Stanley Bohn of Newton, Kan., to Kingston, Jamaica, as teacher at Jamaica Theological Seminary; Martina Burka of Cornwall, P.E.I., to Akron as store clerk at Selfhelp.

Third row: Clair Brenneman of Palmer Lake, Colo., to Indonesia as country co-representative and community development worker; Herman Toevs of Newton, Kan., to Akron as packer at Selfhelp.

Newspaper

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THE LAST WORD

'Let me tell you what God did for me'

Perhaps it's time to say a good word about revival meetings. Besides a trip or two I took down the sawdust trail (literally), what I remember most of the tent evangelistic campaigns of the 1940s and '50s were the testimony meetings that developed in many congregations afterward. I know I sat mesmerized by stories of God taking smokers, drinkers, and fast drivers and turning them into enthusiastic disciples—some who later became church leaders.

Sure, there were abuses. Some brethren (they *were* mostly men) took testimony meetings as occasions for public display, usually telling the same story, always going on too long, tiring out the whole church—and, it seems, the whole denomination.

At least I'm not aware that testimony meetings are alive among us these days. We do schedule "sharing" or "faith at work" in many of our Sunday morning worships. But after we hear all the requests for prayer for the sick, the discouraged, and the needy, there's little time for anything else. More than once the somber atmosphere that develops when we share our needs (an absolutely necessary part of our life together)—this atmosphere has kept me from telling an upbeat story of a simple act of God's grace in my life.

Perhaps, then, it's time we find new ways to tell our stories to each other. Not to do so is to miss an important opportunity to enrich our lives and our understandings as disciples of Jesus Christ.

I remember the day several months ago I felt a great need for a sign of God's presence. "God, show yourself to me," I prayed as I drove through the countryside. A couple of hours later, while going past the local shopping center, I looked up and saw in the clouds what appeared to be a human form, arms outstretched from horizon to horizon. Was that an expression of God, or was that my imagination?

I asked that question of a spiritual brother with whom I have breakfast each week. "If it's meaningful to you, God gave you that sign," he said. "Seize it."

That's one thing telling our stories to each other can do: help us to test our own experiences, to know what is God at work and what is of our own doing, and—most important—to celebrate those occasions when the divine breaks through into the mundane of our lives.

Since then, I've become more aware of how God comes into my life. By telling my stories of God's grace to another, I find that each day those encounters with God have more of a chance of being recognized out of the clutter of everything else that crowds into my life.

So another reason to tell our stories to each other. As Keith Graber Miller says in this issue (see page 1), "With the help of others whose perspectives and visions round out our own and improve our sight, we *can* see the threads of God woven into the fabric of our lives."

Testimony time—telling our stories—can also be an important way of passing on faith and values. A new generation of Christians needs to know what we "old-timers" in the church believe, and they need to see those beliefs lived out in our lives. But they also need to hear our stories of our consciousness of God's hand and will and love overshadowing all we believe and do.

In his paraphrase of the Psalms, as found in *The Message* (NavPress, 1994), Eugene H. Peterson puts it this way: "Generation after generation stands in awe of your work [as] each one tells stories of your mighty acts" (Ps. 145:4).

In a small way, to increase our awareness of how God may be present in our lives, *Gospel Herald* begins a new series of articles this month. In this series, writers tell of significant meetings they have had with the divine. Titled, "How My God Has Met Me," the second installment in that series appears this issue (see page 7). More articles will appear every two weeks or so for the next couple of months.

Our aim in this series is not only to strengthen faith and increase commitment. It is also to make us more sensitive to those times God comes to us in love and grace in our walk as disciples.

Peterson again: "All believers, come here and listen, let me tell you what God did for me" (Ps. 66:16).—*jlp*

March 5, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

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At first Naaman resisted the prophet's suggestion to wash in the river. Then he reconsidered and was healed. The response of a grateful heart: "I now know there is no God but the God of Israel" (2 Kings 5:15).

Surely the God who knew the heart of Naaman knows the heart of Yassir

One narrative from Kings, three stories from the Sudan, all challenges to faithfulness in whatever situation we may find ourselves in the kingdom of God.

by Kenneth L. Sensenig

In 2 Kings 5, a little, nameless slave girl determines an army general's future. Her tip-off leads Naaman to the prophet Elisha for healing from his leprosy. At first Naaman rejects the prophet's advice to dip seven times in the river Jordan. One of his servants leads him to reconsider, and Naaman experiences miraculous healing. Then Naaman responds with a profound confession of faith: "I now know there is no God but the God of Israel." Some elements of the Naaman story remind me of what's happening today in the Sudan. For me, people on both sides of Sudan's ethnic gulf provide powerful insights into understanding the story of Naaman. They also help me grasp the realities of living out Christian faithfulness in a context very different from my own.

Sudan, the largest country in Africa, spans a vast diversity of geography and politics. Sudan straddles a great divide separating north Africa from sub-Sahara Africa. Environmental, political, ethnic, and religious dichotomies define the fault line where the social tectonic plates of Africa clash. Northern Sudanese con-

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Ray Bowman with Eddy Hall:
Three things church buildings can never do 6

MCC adopts two-year focus linking churches around world 9

Attacks on Amish stuns northern Indiana town 10

Simon knows something Naaman forgot: humans are valued by God just because they're human. We can stand tall in God's grace regardless of circumstances.

sider themselves Arabs, while those in the south consider themselves Africans. Most northern Sudanese adhere to Islam. Most southern Sudanese embrace traditional African religions or Christianity.

The Arab majority has traditionally wielded political power over the entire country. Muslim fundamentalists seized power in June 1989. They do not enjoy the popular support of the Africans or the Arabs, but they retain power by controlling the army along with having significant influence within the business, education, and finance communities. Imbalances of power and resource distribution coupled with deep-seated distrust of each other have created chronic tensions within Sudan, resulting in civil war.

When war comes to any area, those social webs which bind communities together disintegrate. School systems crumble, roads degenerate, communication systems break down, medical services disappear. When such destruction occurs, the only recourse open to many people is to flee from the fighting.

Millions have fled from southern Sudan in the last twelve years. Some go south into Uganda or Kenya or east into Ethiopia. Millions more head north into the desert and find themselves in the vast displaced camps encircling Khartoum.

Three friends of mine in the Sudan—John Philip, Simon, and Yassir—attempt to live faithful lives in this land wounding itself with the saber of civil war. In many ways, their experiences closely parallel some parts of the narrative of Naaman, a general in the army of the Syrian king.

John Philip: ministering to the spirit by ministering to the body. Naaman's servant girl possessed the resources to dramatically alter Naaman's life. She held the key of knowledge which could unlock the grip of disease on Naaman's body.

We might excuse her if she had refused to divulge her secret. She could have reasoned that the withered fingers and numbed toes were the retribution of God on this man—this cruel man who tore her from the arms of her mother and brought her as a slave to his heathen land. But this little girl offered a ministry of relief to the sufferer. She served as an example of ministering to the spirit by ministering to the body.

In Sudan, pastor John Philip bears witness to the relief ministry of caring Christians. He and his displaced community try to survive in the desert on the fringes of Khartoum, attempting to maintain a semblance of normalcy in their lives by operating a church and a school. As the displaced flee the lead venom spewing over southern Sudan, they take little with them. They arrive in Khartoum with no means of earning a living. Until stability can be restored to their tortured nation, these displaced southerners will depend on assistance from others to hold their lives together. Mennonite Central Committee and several Canadian churches have assisted in these efforts by buying two donkeys and two water-barrel carts for the donkeys so the community can bring water from the river. Donated funds enabled John Philip to purchase a small grain grinder that he uses to grind sorghum, the staple food. This little mill also generates income for the school John and his wife, Rebekah, have started for the children in their area.

Like the ministry of the Jewish slave, John and Rebekah strive to sow seeds of hope where despair could flourish like weeds.

Simon: standing tall regardless of circumstances. Remember how close Naaman came to choosing to remain a leper rather than enduring the humiliating cost of healing? Only the actions of a saner servant rescued Naaman from his mad dash back to Damascus. Slowly, imperceptibly at first, Naaman tugged on the reigns of his dashing team. He turned around, came back to the Jordan, and stripped away the external embellishments that had defined him up to this point. He left his fine steeds on the riverbank, got down from his flashing chariot, and took off the uniforms with all the ribbons and metals. As Naaman slipped down the muddy riverbank and into the water, where the goats were coming for a drink, there was nothing left but a humble, diseased man. At that point, God healed him. How close Naaman came to letting his false sense of importance destroy his future!

Simon is the very antithesis of General Naaman. He is a fine Christian young man who works at the school where I taught. Simon is of the Dinka tribe, who are noted for their height. It's not unusual for men and women to be six and one-half or even seven feet tall. Simon's family had been wealthy in the past. His father's large coffee plantation supplied sufficient income for Simon's father to support seven wives and 30 children. The war blasted that prosperity into history.

Simon's job is to come to school at 6:30 every morning and sweep out the desert dust which accumulated in the last 24 hours. At least he has a job. It doesn't pay much, and usually his salary is spent for food by the third week of every month. At that point Simon must either visit friends more fortunate than he or else go hungry. Simon's clothing does not always fit well because some articles are handouts from people who are not Dinkas and who are not built like the Dinkas. But this is Simon: a floor sweeper, sometimes hungry, and sometimes wearing ill-fitting clothing.

Simon and I developed a close friendship. Part of that was due to his excellent command of English. Although the university where I taught is an English-medium school, many of the students have only minimal command of the language. Simon liked the little joke: "How do you tell an Ahlia University student from an Ahlia University floor sweeper?" The answer: "The floor sweepers speak English." The joke is indicative of how Simon feels about himself. Although he is displaced, hungry, and ill-clothed, he has not lost that spark of human dignity which God intends us all to possess.

Sometimes I asked Simon to do favors for me. Then I'd give him a little tip for the favor. Often I asked him to go to the finance office to collect my meager stipend at the end of the month. One day Simon returned from one such trip laughing. "What's so funny?" I asked him.

"You know that retired General Izza Eldin who works in the finance office? Well, today he was giving me a hard time. He asked me, 'Simon, why do you walk around with your head up. Why don't you look down? Why do you look me in the eyes?'"

The retired general, of course, was implying: *You're a southerner, a second-class citizen, a floor sweeper, a nobody.* And all the while Simon was meeting him eyeball-to-eyeball.

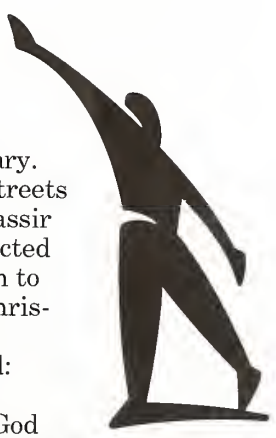
Simon knows something that Naaman almost forgot—that humans are valued by God just because they're human. We can stand tall in the grace of God regardless of our external circumstances.

Yassir: 'Go; you will learn the truth as you go.' The last part of the Naaman account is the most troubling because it fails to satisfy our desire to see faith issues clearly defined. Indeed, Naaman provides one of the murkiest accounts about idols in all of Scripture. At the end of the narrative in 2 Kings, Naaman offered his confession of faith in the God who had healed him. He acknowledged that there is no God but the God of Israel. But then he also asked Elisha for future forgiveness when he entered an idolatrous temple with his Syrian king.

How Elisha responded to this request remains murky in the biblical text. Interpreting it is a challenge. Idolatry ranks among the most abhorrent of abominations recorded in Scripture. It is the sum and substance of the first of the ten commandments: "You shall have no other gods before me." The *shema*, the Hebrew confession of faith, is equally clear: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4)

Why then does Elijah respond to Naaman's request for permission to bow to the idol with the nebulous statement, "Go in peace"? Perhaps God saw that Naaman, despite this distasteful task of assisting his master in idolatrous worship, had his heart in the right place. Perhaps Elisha is implying, *Go; you will learn the truth as you go.* Maybe Elisha, aware that Naaman does not come from a monotheistic background, accepts his profound confession of faith as indicative of the heart's true cry regardless of external circumstances.

My friend Yassir is ethnically and culturally Muslim. Those of us in the believers church tradition can identify with a faith that influences all of one's life—as is the case for a devout Muslim. The framework of a day's activities is built around the five times of praying toward Mecca. What one eats or drinks and how one washes is influenced by religious traditions. These traits, indelibly etched in a Muslim's mind, continue to influence the actions of even those who abandon the faith. Hence, one can be ethnically Muslim without practicing the faith.



Yassir, in his exposure to Christianity both from indigenous and expatriate Christians, came to a point of conversion and embraced the Christ of Calvary. One day as Yassir and I rode the pitted streets together on a little motorcycle, I asked Yassir what it was about Christianity that attracted him. What does he see that prompted him to make that costly step out of Islam into Christianity? Without hesitation and without elaborating, he summed it up in one word: *forgiveness.* I knew what he meant.

Muslims are aware of a high and holy God who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. They know that God will judge the good

(continued on page 8)

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God [sent his Son so] that the world might be saved."—John 3:16-17

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

The Feb. 6 issue of Gospel Herald had four letters protesting printing ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . (Jan. 9). With that much of an outcry from across the country, I had to look up this piece of news. Only after three trips through the paper, page by page, did I finally spy the piece at the bottom of page 14—ten lines listing a coming meeting of a support group for gay, lesbian, and bisexual members of the Mennonite church.

After reading the item, I'm still curious what the outcry is about. I'm sure that this support group differs in theological viewpoint on the issue of homosexuality from me and most other Mennonites. However, denying them access to a publication of their church is hardly the way to deal with this.

Several writers questioned why you would print such an item, since you are "editor of the official publication of the Mennonite Church." I find the answer in your mandate (which is about as many lines as the offensive item): "*Gospel Herald* seeks to inform, inspire, and *lead in analysis and discussion of decisions and issues* facing the Mennonite Church" (emphasis mine).

Surely homosexuality falls into this category. Please keep resisting the pressure of those who would, by stifling, end the dialogue and thereby also end the relevance of the Mennonite Church in today's world.

Bill Swartzendruber
Glen Ellyn, Ill.

Thank you for including a notice about the Supportive Congregation Network's gathering, ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . (Jan. 9) in *Gospel Herald*. Although there are many voices out there worrying about announcing such an event, I strongly believe there are even more who are grateful to see that a gathering supportive of gay and lesbian members happens in the Mennonite Church. Unfortunately, those affirmative voices don't always feel they can speak out, or they have lost the will to do so.

John Flickinger
San Francisco, Calif.

Thank you for displaying the fortitude, discernment, and bravery it must take to be editors of *Gospel Herald* at this time in our church's history—perhaps it has always been so. This includes printing the announcement, ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . (Jan. 9) and the letter by Paul and Martha Snyder (Jan. 30).

We too are parents of a son who is gay, and the Snyder's letter states our position clearly. We had hoped and continue to pray that we might see the Mennonite Church become a kinder and gentler church.

May God continue to grant you—and all of us—grace, wisdom, and love as we seek to discern the mind of Christ and to be faithful stewards of the gospel. May we walk with each other, hear each other's stories, and continue in prayer.

Ruth & Stan Liechty
Goshen, Ind.

What MRS Can Teach Us About PK (Feb. 6) says we must learn to see the good in movements such as Promise Keepers. But I find that very difficult to do when a movement fails to send an unequivocally clear message that women and men are equal.

I was interested to learn that one of the supposed strengths of Promise Keepers is its view of racism as "the foremost unconfessed sin" in North America (***A Movement of Hope—and a Wellspring of Debate***—same issue). Racism, as I understand it, occurs when one person fails to treat another equally because of a biological or cultural trait. Last time I checked, being female was a biological trait.

Trevor Bauman
Elmira, Ont.

Some of your recent articles about men and women (Feb. 6) have struck a dissonant chord with us. As Christians, we will never be able to understand the status of first-century women as portrayed in the Bible until we stop trying to impose our twentieth-century Greek philosophies upon first-century Jewish practice. Women were not chattel. Wives were not slaves. Women were highly valued and respected members of that society. We could cite numerous references, but this is a letter, not an article.

True, the sages and rabbis did not believe that men and women were equal. They believed that God created them differently, and each had a role to fulfill for God. Wives were to submit to their husbands so that by their submission they would teach their

husbands and children how we as believers should submit to God. Submitting here means to make their goals in life align with their husband's goals. It does not mean that wives were to be doormats, slaves, or property.

Men and women are to work together to form a partnership that is much stronger than the individuals separately. Accusations that one sex is trying to dominate the other only leads to separation, not partnership.

Nancy & Joel Nafziger
Hopedale, Ill.

Cindy Kauffman's letter (Feb. 6) raises important questions that many people have. They deserve a response. As a pastor concerned about the issue of clergy misconduct for several years, here is my response. This issue has been and will continue to be with us in the future. It is important that we remember several things.

1. Only incidents that have been investigated and found to have merit are publicized. In fact, it was the action of the committees involved that *Gospel Herald* reported in ***Alleged Misconduct Results in Suspension*** (Dec. 5). That action is taken only when charges are substantiated.

2. We must always remember that the pain and suffering involved—as well as any damage to faith—comes because of the actions of those who engage in misconduct, not because these incidents are reported. They certainly do not come because the victims have the courage to speak out.

As is often the case, clergy who misuse their power are often very effective in other parts of their ministry. This makes it especially difficult for victims to speak out and for the church to deal with cases of misconduct.

3. Certainly Jesus teaches us to love and forgive. But the Bible also teaches us about truth-telling and justice. It has become clear, both from experience and from studies, that genuine love and forgiveness can only come if the truth is told.

When a person holds a position of public trust, as all clergy do, then the truth must be told publicly as well. That is the only way true healing can come—for the victims, for the offender, and for the church as a whole.

I want youth in my church to know that truth is important and that people are accountable for their actions—as well as that love and forgiveness are possible. So I am glad that victims and the church press are willing to tell the truth in these situations.

Ed Kauffman
Beatrice, Neb.

Thank you for the excellent article, ***Facing Tough Questions About the Beginning of Life*** by Roman J. Miller (Feb. 13). This completely pro-life stance is one that we Mennonites need to rally around.

It is so good to see us standing for all of life rather than only choosing to oppose war or abortion. There is no biblical way to choose life on the one issue and reject it on the other.

Nelson & June Shenk
Bally, Pa.

I appreciated the article, ***Facing Tough Questions*** . . . (Feb. 13). But I would like to see Roman J. Miller write a follow-up article addressing the ethical questions he raised in his first paragraph: Should an infertile couple use in vitro fertilization? What about manipulating the molecules of our heredity? Is it morally acceptable to replace a defective gene? Does God implant a soul into a fertilized egg?

These certainly are difficult questions, but they are ones that the church should address.

Carl Horning
Lancaster, Pa.

Who Invited This Guy Named Robert? (Feb. 13). *Robert's Rules of Order* are not sacrosanct. But they do provide a good way for a group of people to transact business. Some order is essential to provide fair and equal recognition and participation by the members of a group as well as to keep individuals from dominating or distorting an agenda.

Every group always has two or more different ideas. These need to be clarified and evaluated to come to a common conclusion. All members deserve to be heard and then in an orderly manner to become committed to the expression or decision of the majority.

To act on consensus is questionable. Whose judgment determines consensus? And this judgment may or may not be right. A majority vote after orderly discussion is the only true solution.

Robert's Rules of Order, which have been used for many years, gives answers to many order questions. The major emphasis of the *Rules* is the right and privilege of all members to participate in the discussion and then to vote their opinion.

Our leaders need to be aware of the procedures as prescribed in *Robert's Rules.* As a church with many organizations, we need training for leaders and moderators, both present and future. Our colleges and church schools could contribute a great deal to our churches by providing this training.

J. J. Hostetler
Goshen, Ind.

With 'No One Having the Desire to Carve Out Their Own Turf' . . . (Feb. 13). Thank you to the leaders of both the Mennonite Church (MC) and the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) who are working together with a "single voice" to have the ministerial offices operate under an integrated structure as early as February 1997.

Your efficiency and good working relationships will have a positive influence on the constituency—especially with those who view integration with some apprehension.

George Hurst
Lititz, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle

Three things church buildings

To expect church buildings to stimulate growth, inspire stewardship, or motivate outreach is to expect the impossible. These are ministry not building needs.

by Ray Bowman with Eddy Hall

If you had been eavesdropping on a phone conversation in my office some years ago, you might have heard something like this:

"I'd like you to come talk to my board about designing a new building," the pastor said.

"That sounds good," I answered. "What do you need?"

"The people need a challenge. They haven't done anything for years, and a building program will wake them up and unite them behind a cause."

"You're right," I said. "Nothing is more exciting than building."

"There's a lot of money in our church," the pastor went on, "but giving has been going downhill lately. A new building will increase stewardship. If we plan a project for a million dollars, I think that will be enough to really challenge the people. I've decided to hire a professional fundraiser to raise about a third of that amount through a three-year giving drive. We can borrow the rest."

"Will your regular income cover the payments?" I wanted to know.

"Not yet, but the new building should bring in new people and the increased giving will cover the payments."

"That's exciting! With that kind of money we can design an award-winning structure that will put your church on the map, one the people of your community will want to attend. What kind of building do you need?"

"Well, we haven't grown for years, so our sanctuary is old and should make a good family life center. That should attract families. So I guess it's logical to build a new sanctuary."

"How many should we plan for?"

"We have around three hundred regular attenders, so we should plan for real growth—say eight hundred to a thousand."

"That should really give your people a vision of the possibilities and motivate them to reach out. When can we start?"

Though I'm not proud of it, I've had many conversations much like this one, passing along the same conventional wisdom I'd heard about building programs from countless pastors and church leaders. I now realize that the conventional "wisdom" includes many fallacies. When a church depends on these, disappointment and sometimes disaster result. Here are three of the most common and costly false expectations I've been guilty of promoting in the past.

1 ***Building will stimulate growth.*** When I got the chance to design my dream sanctuary for one church, I fully expected the building to attract new people and to increase the church's rate of growth. It was the most architecturally perfect building I had ever designed. The congregation was united behind the building program, there were no financial problems—nothing in the process to hinder growth. If ever one of my buildings was going to create growth, this one would.

Ten years after the building was complete, I charted the church's growth history. Before the building program the church had been growing at a steady rate of 3 percent a year. Since the building program, the church had been growing at the rate of 3 percent a year.

It was humbling for this architect to finally

can never do

admit that no church building, however perfectly designed, can make a church grow. The most a building can do is allow a church to grow.

In one church of 160, those who "wanted the church to grow" were promoting a plan to relocate to a business district centrally located among the communities the church served.

Relocation, they claimed, would make for growth. "Our church is in an out-of-the-way place," they said. "Our building is full. The basement smells; there's nothing we can do about it. And we don't have enough parking."

Actually, none of that was true. They could double parking capacity simply by paving and marking the parking lot. All the basement needed was a good ventilation system. With creative planning, their building would give the congregation room to double before needing to build. And their location was actually better than the one proposed for a new building.

It's true that unattractive or inadequate facilities can hinder growth, but in this case church facilities weren't the problem; they were an excuse. The real problem: the church was doing absolutely nothing to grow. They didn't advertise, they didn't have a yellow pages listing, they didn't even follow up on visitors.

Their attitude toward outreach was symbolized by two stern, silent old men who stood guard at the door. Though each wore a "Greeter" badge, they looked more like people you might recruit to frighten children at a Halloween haunted house. When I visited their service, it was not until I greeted the "greeters" that either spoke to me.

Though this congregation didn't need a new building, some members preferred to promote a building program rather than to do the work of outreach that really would bring growth.

2 ***Building will improve giving to ministry.*** The myth that building programs will motivate more giving to ministry is an especially dangerous one because it often appears to be true. Building programs usually do motivate people to give. Especially at the outset, large sums of money can be raised for a building program. Some members may even increase their giving for the duration of a long-term mortgage. So what's wrong with expecting a building program to increase giving to ministry?

The problem is that building buildings is not the same as ministry. Building buildings is not the work of the church. The work of the church is meeting people's needs. While a building program may motivate people to give more to pay for buildings, seldom is the increased giving enough to cover the cost of the building.

A rapidly growing church in Oklahoma earmarked 5 percent of all its income for local outreach. These funds were invested in local ministries in which members of the church were involved, including an inner-city ministry, a ministry to pregnant teens, and several other ongoing projects.

When the congregation launched a multimillion dollar building program, the people gave generously in response. However, when building costs exceeded estimates, the church began looking for places to cut expenses. They abandoned earmarking 5 percent of their income for local outreach and redirected most of those funds to the building program. While total giving increased, funds directed to meeting the needs of people decreased.

This church's experience tends to be the rule, not the exception. While building may temporarily increase giving, it usually results in less, not more, money available for ministry.

3 ***Building will motivate people to minister.*** One of the first churches I worked for was a congregation of fifty in a small Kansas town. The moment I saw their building I understood at once why they wanted to build. It was small, dark, and dilapidated. The members were embarrassed to invite their friends. I would have been embarrassed, too. If only they had a new attractive building, the leaders thought, the people would no longer be embarrassed and would reach out to the community.

I helped them design a building that gave them room to grow. It had a nursery, attractive Sunday school rooms, and plenty of parking. They built that building and opened the doors.

That was thirty-five years ago. Though the church has grown some, today it still hasn't outgrown that building. Why? After all, they did a lot of things right. They really did need a building, the building they built was right for them, and the cost was reasonable.

This church's mistake was that they expected a building to motivate people to minister. If during the building program church leaders had established an outreach plan and recruited and trained people so they would be ready to reach out once the building was complete, no doubt the church would have grown.

These three false expectations all have one thing in common: they all assume that buildings can meet nonbuilding needs. To expect church buildings to stimulate growth, inspire

Three things church buildings will never do

(continued from page 7)

healthy stewardship, or motivate outreach is to expect church buildings to do the impossible. Why? Because these are all ministry needs, not building needs, and buildings can't minister.

If buildings can't minister, what purpose do they serve? They are tools for ministry. A wrench can't repair a faucet and a word processor can't write a book, but they can help the plumber and writer do their jobs better. In the same way, an appropriate building—whether borrowed, rented, or owned—can provide space well-suited to the ministries it serves. It can help people feel more comfortable and welcome. It can provide work space and equipment to increase efficiency. It can make the ministries of the church more accessible to the community. It can do all these and more.

But one thing a building can never do: it can never minister. Only people can do that.

Ray Bowman of Larkspur, Colo., is a church consultant who helps churches grow through coordinated planning of facilities, finances, staffing, and ministries. Eddy Hall of Goessel, Kansas, a full-time freelance writer, also serves as an editor of With *magazine. This article is taken from* When Not to Build: An Architect's Unconventional Wisdom for the Growing Church *by Ray Bowman with Eddy Hall (Baker Books). Used by permission.*

Surely the God who knew the heart of Naaman knows the heart of Yassir

(continued from page 3)

and bad deeds of humans in the great "doomsday." Their hope of salvation is in doing enough good works—praying, fasting, giving of alms—to outweigh the sins they have committed.

Yassir was never sure which way his balance was tipped. While wrestling with these issues, he saw Christians, liberated from the shadow of doom, who were free to exercise good works flowing from a transformed heart. When Yassir saw that, he knew it was for him.

But for Yassir, forgiveness comes with a price. To move from Islam to Christianity is against the law in Sudan. The official judgment on such "apostasy" is death by stoning. I don't fear for Yassir in that respect. I fear more for the social ostracism which will become his lot should his conversion become public knowledge. Many questions remain for him. Should he tell his mother and father he is a Christian? What should he do when he is with Muslims who invite him to pray?

Not long ago I asked Yassir to do a favor for me. I needed an exit visa to travel from Sudan to Kenya. Yassir took my passport, photos, and forms to the immigration police. It was approaching 12:30 in the afternoon, one of the five Muslim prayer times. Yassir entered the office and placed his papers on the cold metal desk behind which sat three officers in the green uniforms. He humbly requested a visa for his foreign friend.

About that time the prayer call rolled out over the city from the neighboring mosques. The officers pushed Yassir's papers aside, rose from their desk, smoothed their uniforms, then stooped down to remove their shoes in preparation for the ritual washing preceding prayer. At that point they turned to Yassir and said, "You come and pray with us."

Here he was, trying to extract a favor for his foreign friend from these officials who were now inviting him to pray. An hour later, Yassir returned and told me this story. "What should I have done?" he asked.

I took the easy way out. "What did you do?"

Yassir looked at his shoes and replied, "I took off my shoes, washed my feet, and we prayed."

"I think you did the right thing," I told Yassir. "You can pray to the God you serve at any time, with anyone, in any position."

I thought of Naaman and his request about idols. I recalled Elisha's response: "Go in peace." Surely the God knew the heart of Naaman also knows the heart of Yassir.

Three stories from the Sudan—a land much like that of the children of Israel during the Syrian occupation. Three people struggling to be faithful—much like Naaman's nameless slave girl as described in 2 Kings 5. All are a challenge to be faithful in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in God's kingdom.

Kenneth and Karen Sensenig and their three children served with Mennonite Central Committee for three years each in Sudan and Swaziland. Kenneth was recently appointed assistant director of MCC East Coast.

MCC board endorses two-year focus on connecting North American congregations with overseas churches

Calgary, Alta. (MCC)—The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) board, meeting here for its annual meeting Feb. 16-17, approved a recommendation that calls for MCC to focus the next two years on connecting congregations from around the world directly with one another.

MCC was created in 1920 to accomplish tasks that churches and partners could not do effectively on their own, reported overseas director Ray Brubacher who brought the recommendation to the board.

"Today many activities can take place directly without institutional programming," Brubacher continued. "Churches are calling for more people-to-people relationships. For years Mennonites in Indonesia have been asking for direct links to Mennonite congregations in North America."

Nothing new to MCC. For the next two years, two part-time staff people, a reference committee, and regional and provincial staff will focus on connecting congregations. MCC has set aside $80,000 (U.S.) annually for the effort.

John A. Lapp (right), MCC executive secretary since 1985, gives Orie Miller's personal and signed copy of "Feeding the Hungry: Russia Famine 1919 to 1925" to Ron Mathies, MCC executive director-elect. Miller was MCC's second executive secretary, Lapp the fourth. Mathies begins his responsibilities in July.

Connecting congregations is not new to MCC. Increasingly MCC has worked at providing direct contacts between congregations. In 1995, for example, congregations in Saskatchewan hosted a choir of Nigerian women. Shirley Peters told the board that she was "inspired by their love of God, enthusiasm, thankfulness, ability to adjust, their love of others."

"We were ashamed of the inequalities between their lifestyle and ours, but the women did not resent it," Peters continued. "The visit showed us our differences, but more importantly we learned about our oneness in Christ."

Bruce Glick, codirector of MCC Great Lakes, said that connecting congregations is "unpredictable, time-consuming, and sometimes difficult."

"But we need to be flexible because this is priority," Glick continued. "Connecting congregations helps us with two vital goals; connecting brings us closer to the churches and it broadens our vision of the church and God's work."

Budget approved. The MCC board approved a 1996 income budget of $35.3 million, based on anticipated contributions of $12.4 million from U.S. supporters and $3.1 from Canadian supporters. The board also approved program plans that call for more than 900 workers in 57 countries.

Also approved was a change MCC bylaws so that a separate committee can be formed to oversee the operation of Selfhelp Crafts of the World. "The work of creating jobs is not ancillary to MCC," noted Joanne Sauder, executive committee member from Grabill, Ind. "It is important this work be done well. We want to create jobs, not just sell brass ducks."

MCC chairperson Phil Rich of Ohio, said the recommendation came because the executive committee "is not set up to provide the business, marketing, and product design that Selfhelp Crafts needs to succeed in today's marketplace."

This Third World marketing program of MCC opened six more stores in 1995.—*Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker*

Reflections on the partnership work of MCC

Calgary, Alta. (Meetinghouse)—I have been a part of the Mennonite church for a decade now—I'm one of those "nonethnics." The work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was one of the influences in my decision to join the Mennonite community.

My experience at the annual binational meetings of MCC has only strengthened a desire to become more involved with this important work by committed Christians around the world.

Connecting constituencies. Working in partnership is the style of MCC now: working together with Christians who live in countries of suffering and who serve their people. This deliberate shift in approach can also be seen in the proposal to formally adopt the "Connecting Constituencies" mind-set. Rather than just representing its constituents through its work overseas, MCC will also facilitate personal connection between peoples of different cultures. This vision could play itself out in the form of letter-writing, humanitarian aid directed specifically to one community, exchange visits, and so on.

I was moved by the stories that two of these partners shared: Jasmina Tosic from the former Yugoslavia, and David and Feliciti Niyonzima in Burundi.

Tosic, through the Bread of Life program, serves refugees from Bosnia and Croatia who have found their way to Serbia. This group presently provides physical and spiritual nurture for 5,000-6,000 suffering people.

The Niyonzimas work toward restoring peace in war-torn Burundi. "All that we do is connected to peacemaking," they said. The root of the unspeakable bloodshed in Burundi lies in the ethnic differences between the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa peoples. David is Hutu, Feliciti is Tutsi, so they have firsthand knowledge of how to blend these two cultures.

"We want to stress that the horizontal relationship is the key to restoring peace," said David, in expressing his gratitude to MCC for being a supportive partner, but not the controlling power, in its aid for the Burundi people.

Besides providing the forum for information exchange and sharing of stories, the annual meeting was a time for networking, keeping personal contacts alive, and spiritual rejuvenation. The Friday evening celebration brought people together to listen to stories, connect with each other through music, and become united in prayer.

—*Cheryl Farris-Manning*

Attacks on Amish stuns northern Indiana town

Nappanee, Ind.—A recent series of robberies and assaults on Amish people in Koscuisko County, Ind., has horrified residents here and raised a dilemma for the Amish, who are reluctant to use the legal system.

Between 10-15 Amish people were robbed or assaulted, most often while they rode bicycles home from work. Five young people have been charged in the rampage that began Jan. 9, according to an article in the *Goshen News*. Police are still searching for three other suspects, said detective Tom Brindle.

The first victim was knocked unconscious after being struck by a car. Another Amish man was robbed of $280 two days later. Most of the attacks resemble the second attack—Amish men on their way home from work struck with a metal pipe or tire iron and robbed of their wallets. One victim suffered a head injury and broken collarbone.

Most of the attacks occurred on Thursdays and Fridays, which are paydays at the factories where many Amish work, according to Associated Press (AP) reports. "Amish men don't carry credit cards, they don't carry checkbooks, they always carry cash," said Brindle, adding that police don't think the attacks are hate crimes but rather occurred because the Amish are "easy prey."

Reluctance to testify. Police were notified through phone calls by Amish people who refused to give their names. One victim, Earl Slabaugh, did identify himself and file a report because "one of us is going to get killed. I've got to do something," according to AP reports.

Most Amish don't report crimes because they believe justice should be left to God, said Sam Yoder, retired professor at Goshen (Ind.) College, in the *Goshen News*. "It is simply not typical for the Amish to prosecute or go to court on this sort of thing."

Police say the reluctance of the Amish to identify themselves is hurting the investigation. "What people don't understand is if you don't have a victim, you can't [legally] have a crime," Brindle said.

One Amish woman said that since the incidents "people are afraid," according to an article in *The Elkhart Truth*. She said that now some bicycle riders stop and get off their bikes to wait for a car approaching from behind to pass.

"My soul looks back in wonder." *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—Richard Allen Farmer, traveling evangelist and professional musician from Dallas, Tex., disarmed his Eastern Mennonite University audience on Feb. 7 with a mixture of expository preaching, dry humor, and keyboard acrobatics. His appearance was part of an observance of Afro-American History Month that focused on the theme "My soul looks back in wonder," taken from a black spiritual. Other special events included addresses by civil rights worker James Farmer and Andrea Cornett-Scott, an African Methodist Episcopal minister.—*Jim Bishop*

Sunday school with missionary zeal:

Mennonite educators try to be 'relevant witness'

Pasadena, Calif (GCMC-MC)—Mennonite educators from the United States and Canada were challenged to approach their work with missionary zeal at a Feb. 9-11 conference here.

"Hollywood is just down the road. Whether it is a movie like *Places of the Heart* or *Die Hard with a Vengeance*, Hollywood cares about values. Do we care?" asked Jeff Wright, Upland, Calif.

"We need to do whatever it takes to call people to faith. Christian education is a missions enterprise at heart," he said.

The event, which focused on adult education, was sponsored by the Commission on Education of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries of the Mennonite Church, and Mennonite Publishing House.

Speaker Sara Wenger Shenk observed that "Christian education used to be done in a religion-infused culture. We used to be able to ride on a deep cultural current that was biblically literate."

Need to be 'counterculture.' Today, however, Christians need to be "counterculture" if they want to have a relevant witness, said Shenk, who is assistant dean and professor of Christian education at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

"We have to touch the center of people's lives," said Wenger, noting that for many Mennonites, the church is not a place where they feel they can ask questions or express emotions such as anger.

Marlene Kropf, Elkhart, Ind., observed that while Mennonites have traditionally had a focus on community, members still find it hard to talk about certain issues. "I cannot raise questions about human sexuality, particularly homosexuality, in my own church, and that is a source of pain for me," she said.

Interest in a common curriculum. A number of participants expressed interest in a common curriculum for adults, similar to what is provided to children through the *Jubilee* series.

Yet, they agreed, the reality is that many adults want to choose what they study. Everett Thomas, Elkhart, Ind., pointed out that often Sunday school classes opt to study an elective instead of the *Adult Bible Study Guide*, which is published by the two denominations.

Shirley Grove, Kitchener, Ont., said that in her congregation, only about 20-30 percent of adults attend Sunday school. "A lot of people have busy work schedules. They can't absorb more information on Sunday morning," she said.

However, Bergen said, people find the time and energy for other classes such as computer training. "This speaks volumes about how valuable Christian education is," she said.

Several noted that adults are often more willing to attend a Bible study class during the week than on Sunday morning.—*Carla Reimer*

Surrounding mothers with 'support and compassion'

Mennonite Church in San Antonio opens center for teen moms and children

San Antonio, Tex.—Two extra rooms in the San Antonio Mennonite Church aren't so "extra" anymore.

As of Jan. 3, they are filled with 22 children and—at lunchtime—their mothers, who attend Brackenridge High School across the street from the church.

The Mennonite Children's Center, housed in the church in this mostly Latino community, provides daycare services for 10 infants and 12 toddlers as well as a parent enrichment program.

"To be an urban church with a tradition of service means making ourselves available to the community around us," says pastor Stephen "Tig" Intagliata. The congregation of 40 members was looking for a way to utilize the space they didn't need after obtaining full use of the building they had been renting.

Adela Piña (center), childcare worker at the Mennonite Children's Center, cares for 5-month-old John Anthony Pulido as 9-month-old Claudia Sanchez (left) waits for some attention. The daycare center opened on Jan. 3 at the San Antonio (Tex.) Mennonite Church and offers after-school tutoring, career planning, and mentoring programs to teen mothers who attend the high school across the street.

Members of the congregation had been "dreaming of commmunity involvement" for quite some time, says Intagliata, and last year they organized a task force to make plans for the center.

Besides childcare, the center offers after-school tutoring assistance to the teen mothers two afternoons a week. They also meet once a week to learn how to plan their futures, covering issues such as college preparation, career planning, and decision-making skills.

A mentoring program matching mothers with members of the church or community will start in the near future.

Drop-out prevention. The center grew out of conversations between Intagliata and counselors and staff at Brackenridge High School. Rita Lightbourn, a social worker for the school district and member of the task force, then "took [the vision] by the horns and went above and beyond her responsibilities," according to Intagliata.

Lightbourn says the program will allow many young mothers to graduate who otherwise may have dropped out of high school because they couldn't find reliable childcare or because of other stresses in their lives.

"Sometimes people think we're encouraging teen pregnancy by having this program," says Lighbourn. "But it has happened. Now we have to deal with that fact and help them graduate."

Intagliata agrees. "One reason some teens get pregnant is because they don't see anything better ahead of them. We try to surround the girls with support and compassion, and hopefully they end up setting goals that they know would be inhibited by having more babies."

Making space for people. Four full-time staff and one part-time worker care for the children. The mothers themselves help the center function through raising money, sewing curtains, and doing laundry. They have also cooked a Mexican meal for the church.

Intagliata says the members of the church who volunteer at the center or serve on the board receive intangible benefits like developing relationships with the young women. "It's a question of how much energy and risk we want to take in getting closer to them. It means making space in our lives for people who are different than us."

—*Valerie Weaver*

Fraktur commemorates Menno Simons' life and work

Goshen, Ind. (Historical Committee)—Menno Simons, the Friesian shepherd who gave his name to Mennonites on six continents, was born 500 years ago.

A commemorative fraktur—a form of German calligraphic folk art that flourished among early schoolteachers in Pennsylvania communities—is now available to celebrate Simons' ministry.

Roma J. Ruth of Harleysville, Pa., created the piece, commissioned by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church. The central text in the piece is a quotation from Simons that calls followers of Christ to "speak peace . . . and walk in the way of peace." The border contains Simons' favorite Bible verse: "No other foundation can be laid than the one which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11)—in Dutch, German, English, and Spanish.

Simons was born in Pingjum in Friesland, just north of the province of Holland, in 1496, and at the age of 28 he was ordained a priest. An inner questioning of his understanding of faith led him to read Scripture and conclude that it called for voluntary adult baptism upon confession of faith. He was baptized in 1536.

Fanatic and violent excesses of early Anabaptists led Simons to the conviction that Christians must relinquish all use of force. He died in northern Germany in 1561 after 25 years of strenuous preaching and writing.

Information on purchasing signed and numbered copies of the piece is available from the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church at 219 535-7477.

New from Herald Press

Bathsheba

People of the Promise series, No. 8

By **James R. Shott**

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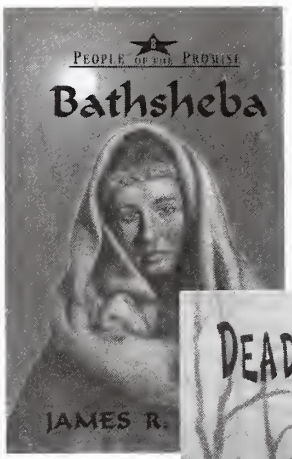

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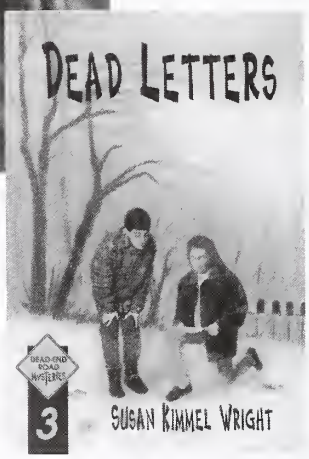

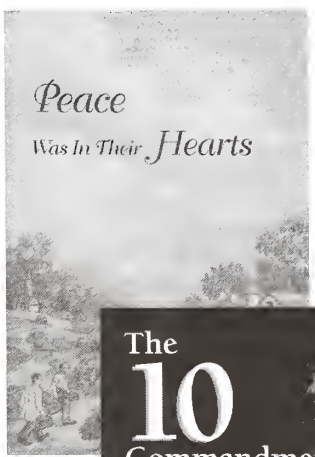

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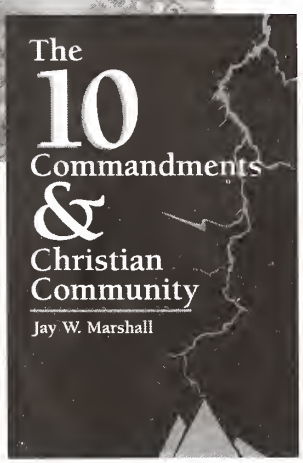

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- **Giving Project hosts write-in.** The Giving Project, a five-year stewardship education project funded by Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite Church agencies, convened a write-in on the role of the deacon Feb. 12-13 at the Amigo Centre in Sturgis, Mich. Participants discussed the history of the diaconate in Mennonite churches and the connection of the deacon's role to congregational stewardship education. Resources developed at the write-in will be included in a congregational manual in preparation by The Giving Project. Mennonite Publishing House and Faith & Life Press expect a joint publication to be ready by the summer of 1997.

- **Swartzendruber re-appointed.** Loren Swartzendruber was appointed to a second three-year term as president of Hesston (Kan.) College by the Mennonite Board of Education (MBE) upon recommendation of the Hesston College board of overseers. The college board also approved a proposal to create a youth ministries major, which now awaits approval from MBE. The board approved the 1996-97 budget plan, setting tuition at $9,750, a 5.8 percent increase.

- **Hesston receives grant.** Hesston (Kan.) College received a $750,000 grant from the J. E. and L. E. Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla., thanks to the contributions of alumni and others. The foundation issued a challenge to the college on April 12, 1995, to raise enough funds to complete construction projects in the first phase of "Plan for a New Century: Enhancing Excellence" campaign to earn the grant. The Mabee grant brings total campaign contributions to $4,743,651.

- **Simons book planned.** Part of the 1996 celebration of Menno Simons' 500th birthday is a coffee table book *Menno Simons: Places, Portraits, and Progeny*. The book chronicles the life of Simons with all known portraits of Simons, 16th century maps, and recent photographs of sites associated with the Anabaptist reformer. Written by Mary Sprunger, history professor at Eastern Mennonite University and Piet Visser, curator of the Mennonite Library in Amsterdam, the book will be published this summer in separate English, German, and Dutch editions.

Celebrating Menno Simons' birthday. *Goshen, Ind. (GC)*—First-year Goshen College student Lora McDonald samples a birthday cake commemorating the 500th birthday of Menno Simons and the baptism of the first Anabaptists, both of which occurred in late January of 1496 and 1525, respectively. Goshen students celebrated with cake and balloons.

- **MPH opens Web page.** The Mennonite Publishing House has announced a new World Wide Web page that has information on many of the products and services offered. It includes Herald Press, Provident Bookstores, and a range of curricula and church resources. The new home page is located at *http://www.mph.lm.com/*

- **New appointments:**

Peter Wiebe, U.S. area representative for Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Bob Gerber ended a pastorate at the Mennonite Church of Warsaw (Ind.) on Dec. 31.

James Isaacs was installed as copastor at Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind., on Dec. 10.

Jerry Kandel resigned as pastor of Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts, Ind., Oct. 31.

Mark H. Keller was ordained at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church on Feb. 4.

David McClintic was licensed Oct. 15 as pastor at Liberty Mennonite Church, Somerset, Mich.

Duane Miller resigned as pastor of Coldsprings Mennonite Church, Mancelona, Mich., Dec. 15.

Ernest L. Miller was licensed at Crest Hill Mennonite Church, Hardy, W.Va., on Nov. 5.

Michael Schneider was licensed and installed as pastor of Maranatha Mennonite Chapel, Nappanee, Ind., on Feb. 4.

H. Michael Shenk III was licensed at Valley View Mennonite Church, Rockingham, Va., on Feb. 4.

James Stauffer became pastor at Cross Roads Mennonite Church, Rockingham, Va., on Jan. 28.

Richard Stoll was licensed Dec. 31 at Berea Mennonite Church, Odon, Ind., for work in Ontario.

Marvin Stutzman was ordained at Deep Creek Mennonite Church, Chesapeake, Va., on Nov. 5.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Doug Hoover left Jan. 3 for Belize for a one-year Eastern Mennonite Missions term. His address is PO Box 30, Orange Walk, Belize.

Mark and Mary Hurst returned to the U.S. Jan. 18 after four years with EMM in Australia. Their address is c/o Stan Hurst, 220 N. Reservoir St., Lancaster, PA 17602.

Bonnie and Peter Vlastaras returned Jan. 31 after six years in Greece with EMM. Their address is c/o Leo Molinaro, 400 Islandway Unit #401, Clearwater, Fla.

Christine and Harold Wenger returned to the U.S. Dec. 15 after six years of teaching and administration in Musoma, Tanzania, with EMM. Their address is 50 Delta St., Mount Joy, Pa.

Dennis and Lori Witmer returned Jan. 4 after five years in Guatemala City. Their address is 740 Shed Road, Newville, PA 17241.

- **Coming events:**

12th birthday retreat, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., March 8-10. Spaces available for parents and children. More information available from 800 839-1021.

38th Illinois Mennonite relief sale, Peoria Civic Center, March 8-9. Features pancake and sausage breakfast, Self-help Craft items, and quilts. Benefits Mennonite Central Committee. More information available from 309 266-7704.

Business and Professional Women dinner meeting, Country Table Restaurant, Mt. Joy, Pa., March 12. Sylvia Nafziger Charles will speak on "Church: Friend or Foe?" Reservations available from 717 697-8643.

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MENNOSCOPE

Lancaster (Pa.) Conference annual meeting, Lancaster Mennonite High School, March 15-17. Featured speakers include Mike Yaconelli, James Lapp, and Richard Landis. Also includes more than 45 seminars and numerous exhibits. More information available from 717 293-5246.

Michiana Anabaptist historians spring meeting, Bethel Missionary Church, Goshen, Ind., March 16. The theme is "From Daniel Brenneman to the Missionary Church today." More information from 219 533-7819.

Discussion of Mennonite authors, Goshen (Ind.) College, March 27-28. Writer and teacher Jeff Gundy will talk about his work and that of other contemporary Mennonite writers. More information available from 219 535-7463.

Women's spring fellowship, Mt. Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church, March 28. Sponsored by the Lancaster Conference Women's Missionary and Service Commission.

25th anniversary banquet of General Board of Mennonite Church, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, April 19. Features music by the Foresingers and interviews with former moderators of Mennonite Church General Assembly. Free but limited tickets available from 610 286-7517.

Conflict in the Church seminar, Hope Church, St. Louis, Mo., April 20. Sponsored by Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. More information available from 708 627-5310.

Courses in peacemaking, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., beginning in April. Classes offered in restorative justice, mediation, and international peacemaking, among other topics. More information from 540 432-4490; email: zimmermr@emu.edu

Annual eastern CPS reunion, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, Aug. 3-4. To be put on the mailing list or for more information, contact John B. Sauder, 717 560-4256.

Reunion of Kansas City Mennonite Children's Home employees, Kansas City, Aug. 9-11. More information available from Karl Wenger, 5316 Outlook, Mission, KS 66202.

• **New books:**

Living Mirror: Young Mennonite Writers, a new collection of poetry and fiction written by Mennonites ages 8-18, was published by the third biennial Mennonite Arts Weekend. Available for $5 each. The 1994 edition costs $3.50 each, and the set is available for $6. Send payment to Mennonite Arts Weekend, c/o Suzanne Marie Hitt, 3981 Woodridge Blvd. Apt. 10, Fairfield, OH 45014-7570.

• **New resources:**

Songs of Earth, Echoes of Heaven, a recording of folk songs and spirituals, features tenor Ben Heppner and the West Coast Mennonite Chamber Choir. Benefits Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia and Supportive Care Services. More information from 800 622-5455.

What we have tasted, a new album by the Reunion Vocal Band, is now available. Features original songs and arrangements by members of this group of Mennonite musicians from the United States and Canada. Cassettes and CDs available. More information available from Reunion Vocal Band, 411 Lake St., Ephrata, PA 17522-2659; phone 717 733-0567.

• **Job openings:**

Faculty position in acute-care nursing, Goshen (Ind.) College. Master's degree in nursing required; doctoral work preferred. Half-to-three-quarter-time position begins fall 1996. Send résumé and three professional references to John D. Nyce, interim academic dean, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. Men and minorities encouraged to apply.

• **Change of address:**

Dorothy and Lawrence Brunk, Box 127, Springs, PA 15562.

NEW MEMBERS

Albany, Ore.: George and Ora Gedmens.

Emma, Topeka, Ind.: Sonda Yoder, Matthew Hostetler, Lori Freed, Jennifer Mast, Nathan Yoder, Nicholas Yoder, Adam Yoder, Jeannette Bennett, Ernie Miller, Sally Miller, Marlin Yoder, Willie Schwartz, and Cathy Schwartz.

Fort Collins (Colo.) Fellowship: Chris Coen, Rick Coen, and Connie Swift.

Lindale, Harrisonburg, Va.: Erica Mast, Derek Beyer, Brad and Cindy Dixon, Kerry

and Becky Leichty, John and Vanessa Speigle, Chester and Esther Yoder, and Fred and Karen Eberly.

Lockport, Stryker, Ohio: Dan Cobb.

BIRTHS

Alves, Ophelia, Brooklyn, N.Y., MariJo Pricilla (third child), Feb. 9.

Derthick, Barb and Steve, Raleigh, N.C., Anna Marie (second child), Feb. 2.

Dilbone, Lisa Bacher and Jon, Syracuse, Ind., Jessica Dawn (first child), Jan. 30.

Gingerich, Jeanne McMillan and Andy, Kitchener, Ont., Jacob Donald (first child), Dec. 15.

Hanrahan, Ruby Warkentien and Blain, Brooks, Alta., Allanah Marie (second child), Nov. 27.

MacDonald, Annette Boshart and Kevin, Scarborough, Ont., Wesley Kevin (first child), Feb. 2.

Martin, Marcia Miller and Darin, Ephrata, Pa., Hilton Van (first child), Nov. 24.

Martin, Karen Beacom and Rod, Elmira, Ont., Tori Ellen (second child), Feb. 4.

Miller, Deb Weaver and Bill, New Hill, N.C., Leah Marie (first child), Jan. 8.

Miller, Lori Ward and Ken, Middlebury, Ind., Lexson Cord (fifth child), Feb. 4.

Pioche, Veronica and Ben, Ambher Lynn (second child), Jan. 18.

Roth, Brenda Reinford and Andy, Sellersville, Pa., Malinda Janelle (third child), Feb. 15.

Sinclair, Joey Paddock and Douglas, Brooks, Alta., Taylor Douglas (fourth child), Oct. 25.

Weaver, Janice Breneman and Bruce, Ephrata, Pa., Adam Todd (first child), Dec. 22.

Weber, Mary Lash and Brent, Ephrata, Pa., Grant William (third child), June 26.

Wisseman, Janette and Darrel, Bend, Ore., Oliver Christian (third child), Dec. 6.

MARRIAGES

Burkholder-Snyder: Dina Burkholder, Ephrata, Pa. (Ephrata), and Ronald Snyder, Sept. 9.

Gottshall-Kulp: Theresa Gottshall and Harvey Kulp, Ephrata, Pa. (Ephrata), Nov. 11.

DEATHS

Gingerich, Sarah Jutzi, 88, Baden, Ont. Born: July 1, 1907, East Zorra, Ont., to Daniel and Veronica Roth Jutzi. Died: Feb. 10, 1996, New Hamburg, Ont. Survivors—children: Elroy, Irene Schultz, Harold, Viola MacGillivray, Leola Roth; 18 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elmer Gingerich (husband). Funeral and burial: Feb. 13, Steinmann Mennonite Church, by Ingrid Loepp Thiessen and Herb Schultz.

Martin, Allen K., 73, Lititz, Pa. Born: June 22, 1922, Lancaster County, Pa., to Clayton C. and Lizzie H. Kurtz Martin. Died: Dec. 7, 1995, Manheim Twp., Pa. Survivors—wife: Lydia G. Martin; children: Lawrence M., Larry L., Linda Fay Woodhouse, Twila Mae Houck; brothers and sisters: Harvey K., Aaron K., Ammon K., John K., Mary Witmer, Nora High; 6 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Ephrata Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: Dec. 11, Hammer Creek Mennonite Church, by M. John Nissley, L. Keith Weaver, and Carl Kniss.

Martin, Charles W., 78, Ephrata, Pa. Born: Jan. 25, 1917, Lancaster, Pa., to Henry S. and Mattie R. Snader Martin. Died: Nov. 10, 1995, Ephrata, Pa. Survivors—wife: Lois M. Miller Martin; son: Jesse D.; brother and sisters: G. Earl, Leah S. Hurst, Lydia M. Martin, Edith A. Gingrich; 7 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Doris N. Stehman Martin (first wife), Donald R. (son), and Donna L. Martin Haller (daughter). Funeral: Nov. 13, Ephrata Mennonite Church, by L. Keith Weaver and M. John Nissley. Burial: Indiantown Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Miller, Minnie Wingard, 92, Hollsopple, Pa. Born: Sept. 30, 1903, Cambria County, Pa., to Ammon and Hettie Kaufman Wingard. Died: Jan. 13, 1996, Johnstown, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—children: Louise Gehman, Mary Holsopple; brothers and sisters: Robert, Eva Wagner, Orie, Frieda Mahler, Willard; 13 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: James Miller (husband), Esther and Eva (daughters), and James (son). Funeral and burial: Jan. 16, 1996, Kaufman Mennonite Church, by Donald D. Sharp.

Schrock, Almeda L. Lasater, 84, Metamora, Ill. Born: Jan. 11, 1912, Lockwood, Mo., to William L. and Emillaia Sweeney Lasater. Died: Feb. 13, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivors—children: Merlin J., Marvin, Mary Yoder, Marie Selby; 7 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Mearl A. Schrock (husband). Funeral: Feb. 16, Metamora Mennonite Church, by Robert Nolt. Burial: Stewart-Harmony Cemetery.

Shank, Winona Swartz, 85, Sarasota, Fla. Born: April 28, 1910, LaJunta, Colo., to J. Clyde and Anna Flisher Swartz. Died: Feb. 11, 1996, Sarasota, Fla., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—children: Grace Witmer, Goldie Pfile, Ray and Wilmer Shank; brothers and sisters: Karen Graber, Ernest F. and Weldon Swartz. Predeceased by: Ward D. Shank (husband). Funeral: Feb. 14, Bay Shore Mennonite Church, by Rocky Miller. Burial: Salem Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Weaver, Paul F., 85, Goshen, Ind. Born: April 4, 1910, Harrison Twp., Ind., to Christian and Sarah Martin Weaver. Died: Feb. 7, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Nina Weldy Weaver; children: Evelyn Miller, Fay Etta Horst, Shirley Penner, Edward R., Wayne, Lawrence; 18 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, 2 stepgrandchildren, 5 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jane Wyse (daughter). Funeral: Feb. 11, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, by Wes Bontreger and Clare Schumm. Burial: Yellow Creek Mennonite Church North Cemetery.

He pastored the First Mennonite Church in Colorado Springs for nine years.

Obituary correction: Stella (Miller) Sutter's (Feb. 6, 1996, *Gospel Herald*) correct maiden name is Reinhardt). Her mother's maiden name was Miller.

'Choice for Children' poster preparation. *Lancaster, Pa.*—Marjorie Peters (left) and Becky Landis work on a "Choice for Children" poster to be displayed at the annual meeting of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference in March. The display, sponsored by the peace and social concerns commission of the conference, is designed to be a visual expression of concern about abortion. It will include 180 posters with 185 baby faces on each poster, representing the 33,300 abortions that take place each week in the United States. The display will be available for other groups to borrow.

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THE LAST WORD

'Caedmon, sing me a song . . . '

Passing a harp around the table after a feast and entertaining each other with songs and poems was a tradition in Whitby, a seventh-century Celtic monastic community.

It may sound like a fine tradition to us—but it didn't to Caedmon, an elderly shepherd who had recently joined the community and who couldn't carry a tune. He must have dreaded that steady journey of the harp from one lap to the next, closer and closer to him, while his hands sweated and his face flushed.

Caedmon always managed to slip out of the room just before the harp reached him. One such awkward night he had a particularly good excuse—it was his turn to look after the animals in the barn. The historian Bede tells us in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* that after Caedmon had curled up in the stable to sleep, probably exhausted and relieved to have once more dodged the harp, he had a dream.

A stranger came to him and said, "Caedmon, sing me a song."

Caedmon probably laughed in his face. "I can't sing," he protested.

"But you shall sing for me," said the visitor in his dream.

And as in all good legends, the miraculous happened. Caedmon "found his voice," as we'd say today, and sang a song of praise to God as "fashioner of Heaven's fabric" who created "Heaven as a rooftree" and "Middle Earth . . . [as a] mansion." His private hymn composed in the stable at the order of the stranger is the earliest English poem of known date and authorship, and he became one of the greatest Celtic poets.

Caedmon's story is acted out in our churches over and over again. We think of the creative arts as a cornered market, and often we refuse to share any of our own creativity with the church—in effect, "dodging the harp." We let it up to the qualified artists with expertise, confidence, and training to create the music, sights, and words that awe us.

And those people in our congregations who devote themselves to certain arts must be acknowledged, encouraged, and utilized. They can lead us into worship of our Creator because of their disciplined attentiveness to the Spirit and hours of honing their God-given skills.

But we must be aware of the possibility of "creative shut-down" in the rest of us. The banquet halls of churches certainly aren't places for *our* music, we think. We've never had voice lessons, we got C's in high school writing class, or our drawings look like something a second-grader might be proud of.

Of course, not everyone likes to share their creative ventures with groups. And creativity often has nothing to do with music, poetry, art, and dance but rather with a new idea for a service project or Sunday school. But for those who feel the urge to write a poem or pick up a flute, churches should be safe places where competition and comparison are crowded out by an openness to God's voice speaking through each of us.

Another reason we may dodge the harp is because we know our music won't brim with convinced praise and nailed-down belief. Perhaps our art doesn't fit with the sometimes one-dimensional praise of our banquet-hall churches. The arts were—and often still are—suspect in our churches because they tell stories we want to forget, draw pictures of us when we're not posing, and sing songs of dissonance that hurt our civilized ears.

Honest and unassuming art, like the poems of David and Job, doesn't always sound like Caedmon's first hymn. Art often cries, "Why was I not buried like a stillborn child?" (Job. 3:16) and "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" (Ps. 13:1a). Art that shutters with desperation and questions has a place in our Scripture—it must surely have a place in our churches. By showing us the underside of our faith, this art leads us to fuller, more sustaining understandings of God.

Maybe we're not there yet, either collectively or individually. We are still getting used to the idea that God can speak to us through the arts. But even if we keep dodging the harp, may we at least slip out to the stable where God visits us and asks us to sing—if not for the guests at the feast or the people in the pews, then at least for the One in our dreams.—*vsw*

March 12, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

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How my God met me (3):

Revival fires and an Anabaptist pilgrimage

How do children who are nurtured in Christian homes, raised within the family of God, cross the great divide and become adult members of the church?

by John D. Roth

Children growing up in religious homes have much for which to be thankful. Of that fact let there be no doubt. But the warm, nurturing context of childhood faith—especially in Mennonite households—can also create a certain confusion about the nature of sin and our corresponding need for God's grace.

Like many other young Mennonites, I grew up in a fairly traditional, stable, two-parent Christian family. At our home we regularly paused for devotions, we prayed at mealtime (even in restaurants), and we could be found in church without fail every Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening. In my childhood, Christian identity was embedded in a culture which permeated all of life, affecting not only the nature of our work and our entertainment but also the way we dressed, spoke, behaved, and thought.

In virtually all respects it was a good childhood, filled with structure, security, and love. But I also recall hearing sermons which stressed the significance of choice in matters of faith. Unlike our Lutheran or Catholic neighbors, we Mennonites believed in the idea of

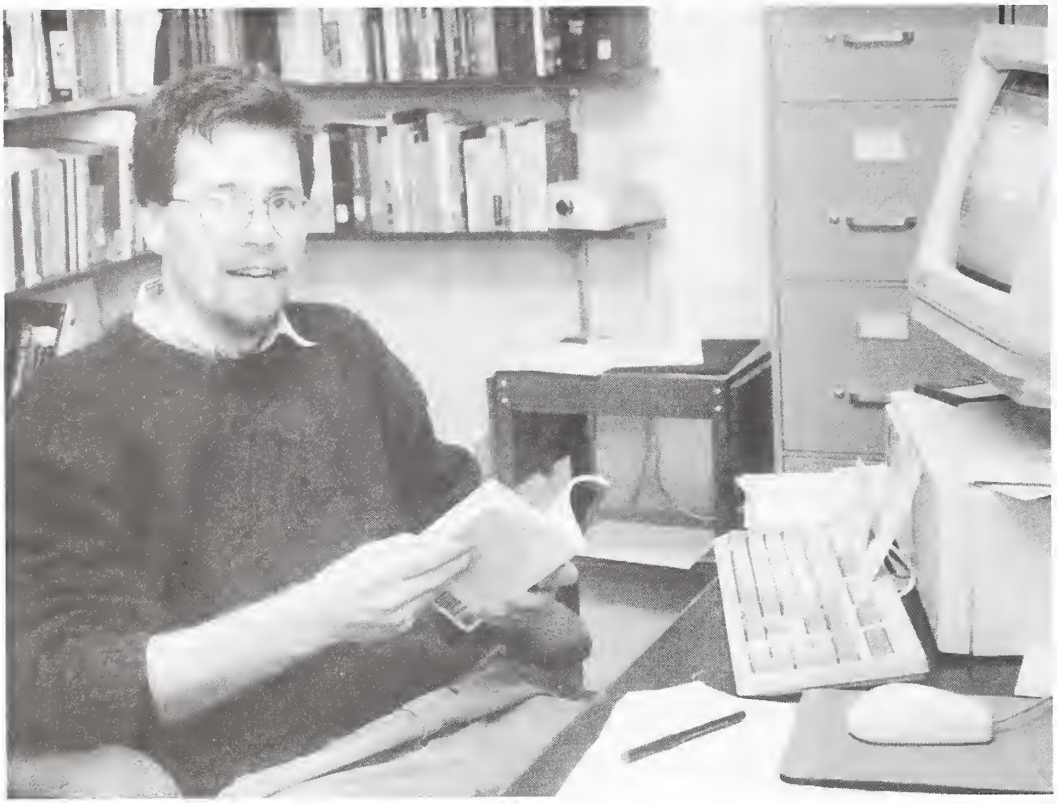
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Don Friesen:
Letters to the editor of 'The Heavenly Financial Times' 8

'Perspective' by J. Robert Charles:
All the king's horses and all the king's men in Bosnia 10

MCC workers in Burundi move to more volatile area 11

Mennonite worker reflects on tragedy of London bombings . . . 12



Author John D. Roth at his desk today as editor of Mennonite Quarterly Review.

(continued from page 1)

adult, or believers, baptism. Children were not simply born into the church; rather, each individual chose to enter the church of his or her own free will.

Many of the sermons, echoing the rugged dualism of the Schleitheim Confession, made it clear that there were only two options in this world: the kingdom of darkness or the kingdom of light, a life of sin and wickedness or a life of redemption. In the end, it was an either/or choice. There was no middle ground between the fellowship of adult believers and the fallen world all around. This point was reinforced in those occasional Sunday evening services in which ex-junkies and former gang members from places like Chicago and New York City told harrowing tales of conversion from wickedness and crime to the peace of Jesus Christ.

All this served to complicate the picture. I would lie awake in bed at night, pondering the mysteries of urban evil, reflecting on the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, and wondering where I—a conscientious, morally scrupulous, somewhat nerdy, nine-year-old boy—fit in. Clearly I was not yet a baptized member of the church. Therefore I must still be in the kingdom of darkness. But up against the likes of a Nicky Cruz, it somehow seemed like my life of sin failed to qualify. How do children nurtured in Christian homes, raised within the family of God, cross the great divide and become adult members of the church?

My solution, as it turned out, came in the spring of 1969. One Sunday morning an announcement was made in church that Holmes County (Ohio) was—spiritually speaking—a "field white unto harvest." An evangelist well-known in Mennonite circles had consented to come to the area to begin the task of winnowing and reaping. The meetings were originally scheduled to last one week. Since this was a relatively unusual happening, it was simply assumed that our family—all five children—would attend each night of the revival.

I vividly recall the electricity in the air that first Sunday evening as we drove toward Berlin and saw the tent looming on the horizon in the pasture field at Sturgis Miller's farm. Men scurried about with flashlights and special red canes as they parked the cars which were converging in long lines off State Road 39. I remember the walk through the pasture to the enormous tent, along with hundreds of people—all freshly scrubbed—streaming in from all sides. There inside the tent, amidst the smell of fresh sawdust, were hundreds of wooden folding chairs and special hymnbooks. At the front, a flatbed trailer doubled as a stage.

I shivered with excitement as the singing began. Then I was completely engulfed in the booming voice of the evangelist who, in simple, vivid terms, outlined the steps of salvation. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." There it was in a nutshell: all of us were destined to a life in eternity; the question was only whether that life in eternity was going to be in heaven or the fiery pits of hell.

Then, almost without warning, it came—the fateful moment of decision, the invitation to come forward and to make a public declaration of commitment to Christ. That first Sunday evening I was so transfixed by the surroundings, so awed by the drama of the event itself (this was, after all, in the days before TV was common in Holmes County Mennonite households) that I was simply too paralyzed even to consider going forward.

But Monday was a long day. Never before was I so keenly aware of the wages of sin; never before had I thought so much about the nature

of fire; never before had I been so grateful for the gift of God's forgiving grace. On Monday night, almost as soon as the invitation was extended—the choir wasn't even through the first verse of "Just as I Am"—I took that long walk forward, met my prayer partner, and said a prayer of confession.

Now things would have been fine if the revival team, having successfully seen me into the fold, had packed their bags, folded the tent, and moved on. Unfortunately, however, we were still early in the week. On Tuesday night the invitation was extended to those who had once made a commitment but might now want to rededicate their lives to Jesus. After only a moment of reflection, I decided that probably applied to me. So I lurched off down the aisle once again.

On Wednesday night I had resolved—thanks to the good counsel of my parents—to resist any urge I might have to go forward. But just as things were winding up, the evangelist told a long and complicated story—a story about a man who had made and then squandered a fortune—which put things in a completely new perspective. The story was haunting and compelling. And when the preacher suddenly said, "Young man, is the Lord calling you?" I was certain he was pointing directly at me, and it seemed like the right thing to do.

By Thursday evening, I was on a first-name basis with the prayer partners up front. Haunted by the thought of eternity and convinced there were still sins in my young life which had not yet been rooted out, when the call came for "backsliders," I knew this too included me.

And I wasn't the only one. Indeed, by the end of the week, the success of the revival meeting had been so great that community leaders decided to continue it for yet another week. I remember crying all the way home on hearing that news, wondering if I could handle another week of soul searching.

I am aware that Christians of goodwill have differed on the place of revival meetings. Many Mennonites who came of age in the revival era like to criticize such meetings for their emotional manipulation or theological naïveté. And there was a period in my own life when I tried to reject completely that experience, fancying that the emotional trauma I had endured that week was the source of everything that might have gone wrong in my spiritual life thereafter.

But today I'm not so sure. It strikes me that the experience at the revival meetings shaped my faith in the years that followed in several significant ways. For one thing, long after the meetings were over, the event helped remind me that in matters of faith there is indeed a battle. Even without the vivid imagery of angels and demons, the fiery pit of hell, or the tranquil bliss of heaven, I affirm today with the evangelist that there is such a thing as evil in the world. I affirm that evil takes a surprising variety of expressions, and that as Christians we are called to name the evils and to move forward confidently in the strength of God.

The event also reminds me that faith indeed implies active choice and that this choice has a public dimension. It is often easy for those raised in the church to forget that being part of the family of God is not the same thing as making a decision to join the church of Jesus Christ. Whatever reservations one might have about the approach, revival meetings provided an important opportunity for young people nurtured in Christian homes to make public decisions.

Even more importantly, I affirm the language of grace which imbued those sermons in the revival tent. To be sure, talk about God's grace can become trite, formulaic, cheap. But the Christianity of my youth was defined almost exclusively in terms of good works or proper behavior. If nothing else, the language of the revival was a reminder that no amount of good deeds, discipleship training, Voluntary Service, Mennonite Disaster Service, or Mennonite Central Committee assignments—all excellent activities—are a substitute in the end for the free gift of God's forgiveness and grace.

A full decade after my experience at the revival meetings, a sequel to the story occurred which offered further testimony to the surprising ways God's grace can be revealed. Intent on getting an education, I had just completed a year in college. I had traveled a long way since my earnest, innocent days in the spring of 1969. I had discovered, at the ripe age of 18, that the mark of a truly educated person was systematic doubt. I had long since begun to

(continued on page 4)

Being part of the family of God is not the same as joining the church. Young people who are nurtured in Christian homes need to make public decisions for Christ.

'I left Zurich that day a changed person. I had not found my people; my people had found me. Embraced by a community of God's people, I was touched by God's grace.'

doubt the wisdom of my parents; I was beginning to entertain doubts about my faith; and after a brief encounter with the college classroom, I also had begun to doubt the educational system itself. At some point I reached the decision that to get properly educated, I would have to do it on my own.

So I left college to see the world. Through a fortunate set of connections, I came in contact with a family in Austria and made arrangements to live and work with them on their small farm. In October, following the harvest season, the family offered to buy me a three-week train ticket to travel anywhere in Europe. So I set about to make travel plans.

I was determined from the outset not to turn my vacation into a Mennonite pilgrimage to the Anabaptist "holy lands." Instead, I eyed the country which seemed to offer the greatest contrast to the world of Mennonites, both geographically and spiritually—Greece.

In Greece, far from home, far from the Mennonite work ethic, I could relax on the beaches, enjoying the clear sky and the warm breezes blowing in off the deep blue Aegean Sea. In contrast to my own provincial past, I reasoned, Greece was a land of real culture, the home of Plato and Socrates, Aristotle and Aristophanes, Aeschylus and Euripides. Here at the wellsprings of an ancient and pagan culture, amidst the ruins of the Acropolis, I could ponder the meaning of life.

The only problem was money. I had a rail ticket with unlimited miles, but I was resigned to living on a tight budget for food and accommodations.

I arrived in Greece late on a Saturday night and woke up early the next Sunday morning eager to stroll through Athens, to take in the sights, and to get a feel for the lay of the land. It was a wonderful day.

But late in the afternoon, as I was walking back to the youth hostel, an agitated young man approached me. In broken German he told me his story. He was a Yugoslavian, in Greece only for the weekend to gamble with some friends. Fortune, he claimed, had smiled on him. He had won thousands of Greek drachmas; but the banks were closed and drachmas were hard to exchange in Yugoslavia. After some hurried negotiating we finally agreed to a black-market exchange at double the official rate.

At the end of the transaction, he handed me a thick wad of bills and left with my Austrian schillings as I carefully stuffed his drachmas into a neck purse for safekeeping. As I continued on my way, I could only marvel at my good fortune. I had only been in Greece a single day and already things were going great. Thoughts of skiing at Saint Moritz flitted at the edge of my mind.

When I got back to my room to count the money once again, however, those thoughts and all my plans came to a crashing end. I did not have 8,000 drachmas but rather a single drachma note, wrapped neatly around a wad of Italian newspaper carefully cut to size. It was a shattering moment. I was angry and humiliated. Visions of strolling leisurely through the Acropolis, of lolling on Greek beaches, suddenly evaporated. Moreover, I still had a full two weeks of travel ahead of me, now with a budget of thirty dollars.

The next morning I took the first train I could find to the mainland. I had no clear sense of destination or purpose. I just wanted to get out of Athens. For a whole day and then most of the night, I sat immobile in the northbound train, alternately cursing humanity in general and my own stupidity. Toward morning, I remember waking up and hearing the conductor announce the next stop as Zurich, Switzerland.

Without really intending to, I stumbled off the train, backpack in tow, and began to wander around the city. Eventually I came to the Limmat River and followed its banks until I arrived at a large cathedral, the Grossmunster church, with a large statue of Ulrich Zwingli, the famous Swiss Reformer, prominently displayed outside. I walked inside the church and slipped into a pew, tired, angry, and nearly in tears.

As I sat there, I slowly became aware of

(continued on page 19)

"O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!"—Ps. 95:6-7

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

I wonder what editorial judgment would accept for publication the article ***Loving People the Way Jesus Loved People*** (Nov. 21). It makes us all look pretty bad. And it also comes at a strange time—the same year that the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church adopted a new confession of faith.

Whose interpretations shall we follow when, as the article suggests, we "submit unconditionally to what the Bible teaches about faith and practice"? This sounds like works-based salvation to me, confirmed by these words: "The only thing that will save us is a renewal of our love, worship, and obedience to the risen Lord."

This article was too long on generalizations and too short on a pastoral understanding of human nature. People will not stick around for compassion if they are told ahead of time how bad they are. One of my pastor-friends has suggested we divide congregations into two groups: *perfect* and *ministering*. He says he wants to pastor a ministering congregation. I'm with him.

Now the lead article, ***Confronting Sin in the Congregation*** (Feb. 20) begins: "One of the most difficult tasks I perform as a pastor is confronting persons in my congregation whose behavior is inappropriate." I don't know what my most difficult task is, but one of my most important pastoral tasks is to celebrate God's grace as I participate in the life and burdens of the people (Rom. 5-6).

I don't want to disagree with the good things these authors have written. But their perspective seems inadequate and the emphasis misplaced.

Urbane Peachey
Akron, Pa.

Your decision to limit the discussion of homosexuality in "Readers Say" was a wise one. It is right that you exercise a moderating role if a discussion comes too close to being a shouting match.

However, it seems to me that the recent statement by the Council on Faith, Life, and Strategy on the meaning of "loving dialogue" (Dec. 12) is an attempt to rewrite history. The Purdue '87 statement was not approved as a "position." It was the understanding of the Mennonite majority and not meant to end conversation between the majority and the minority.

In its statement, CFLS is attempting to redefine dialogue. It believes the majority should be so certain it is right that it can only instruct the minority. Dialogue dies if one of the parties will not permit itself to question its own views.

The same is true for those voices who chastise you for printing the item ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . (Jan. 9). Why should we not know about the activities of the believing gay community and the churches of refuge? Can we not be trusted to decide if we should attend these activities? Why are people so fearful?

I would like to read reports by Mennonite scholars on the meanings of obscure Greek and Hebrew words; by parents of homosexuals on how they relate to their sons and daughters; by believing homosexuals on their spiritual pilgrimages; by supportive congregations on the discernment process that led them to where they are.

The views of the majority should likewise be reported and respected by the minority. Am I naïve in believing that careful reading is not beyond us?

CLFS could serve the church well if it developed a strategy whereby majority and minority persons could learn to dialogue quietly.

Martin W. Lehman
Sarasota, Fla.

How Can We Keep from Singing? (Jan. 16). Following several back surgeries, I haven't been able to ride my bicycle through the brisk morning air from home to office. Instead, I use a stationary bike in my garage. My friends, who think it must be terribly boring to be in one position for the 24 minutes it takes for me to ride five miles, suggest I watch TV to catch up on the news as I ride.

I have found a better answer. Why not repeat from memory the hymns I sing in church? Often as I start my ride I begin with "I Owe the Lord a Morning Song" by Mennonite hymn writer Amos Herr. Indeed, *Hymnal: A Worship Book* is full of hymns suitable for singing while bicycle riding!

My 24 minutes of singing are soon gone, my spirit has been lifted, and I've had my exercise. And I am in far better shape to face the new day than I would have been by watching the news.

Carl Kreider
Goshen, Ind.

Wanderer, Come Home; But First, Wander (Jan. 30) should help us in the complexity of relationships between the youth of our churches and our colleges. I wish it were possible to move from childhood into maturity without the struggles and confrontations that many of us have had to experience. But if we grew through them, I suppose they were good for us.

Our problem is what it has always been: to decide which "scouts" to trust and follow: Joshua and Caleb—or the ten who, lost in the immensity of their fears, were unable to trust their God. Through their action a generation died wandering in the wilderness.

What a different story it would have been had that generation risen up and occupied the land and the new life God had waiting for them.

Chester C. Osborne
Hesston, Kan.

Kyle D. Longacre says it well in ***Going Home Is the Most Difficult Cross-cultural Experience*** (Jan. 30). It is very unfortunate that we belatedly discover this truth. The enthusiasm of newly gained insights and growth-enhancing experiences—combined with the untempered independence of young adulthood—frequently make us critical with the traditions of our home congregations.

Except in the eyes of a few understanding adults, even the most devout theology student can negate the good reputation that our church colleges have. Sometimes our undisciplined "freedom" from dead legalism only adds injury to insult. Public relations has rarely been our strength as students.

But while students may not welcome reminders about good diplomacy and being patient with their home congregations, I fear that the supposedly mature adults in our local congregations are equally resistant to hearing criticism or in understanding the idealism and impatience of youth.

Our Mennonite college presidents and deans might well give this facet of cross-cultural training considerably more attention. But it is equally as important that we "elders" back home welcome and encourage our students.

Ivan R. Unger
Cambridge, Ont.

Alumni Group Speaks Up for Mennonite Colleges (Jan. 30). It's no surprise to me that Mennonite Church colleges have enrolled 19 percent fewer Mennonite students since 1988. As conferences cut their youth ministry staff during the late '80s and early '90s, I predicted one by-product would be an 18 percent decline in Mennonite college attendance. It's rather gratifying to miss by only one percentage point.

Sadly, those shortsighted decisions are now bearing sour fruit. Pendulum-pushing has been a favorite pastime in the church. So when a crisis or special need occurs, rather than maintaining a steadiness of vision and ministry, we swing all the resources one direction or another.

Yes, many needs require attention, and in some situations we can afford to shift resources. But the most foolish swing is away from youth ministry. Leaders forget that a youth generation is only three to four years. So anytime the church cuts back its services to young people, it will quickly lose them to others who are always glad to make connections.

In the past many conference youth ministers arranged special visits for high school students to Mennonite colleges. Or they scheduled resource persons and groups from these colleges to speak, perform, and interact with

Being born again is possible . . .

The article ***Being Born Again Is Possible, Even for a Stodgy, Middle-Aged Seminary Professor*** (Feb. 13) leaves me with much concern. Here is someone teaching in one of our seminaries who obviously needs to be taught.

The author states that he had long been a Christian, yet had not been born again. Wrong. He may have been a Mennonite, but he was not a Christian. Being Mennonite does not make one a Christian. One only becomes a Christian by being born again.

Lewis E. McDorman
Premont, Tex.

Thank you for printing Ted Koontz's story. Indeed, it must be embarrassing for Koontz to confess his need to be converted again and to have a deeper experience of the grace of God. But thankfully he made himself vulnerable.

As a missionary recently returned from Africa, I too am being born again. I have had to repent of my feelings of superiority in Africa. I have had to write letters of repentance to several people in Tanzania. I have had to ask for prayer from a loving circle of brothers at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church. I have had to cry out for the grace and forgiveness of God.

As an Anabaptist Mennonite, I also must confess to feelings of superiority over other groups and to suspicions about the evangelical movement, including Promise Keepers. Now having heard the testimony of some who went to the Promise Keepers' clergy conference and came back with praise, with tears, with rejoicing over the unity of God's people, with a new vision for racial reconciliation, and with a new sensitivity to their wives, I can only praise God. And I ask God to forgive me of a critical spirit.

Thanks to God, it is possible to be born again. I am claiming the promise and asking God to cleanse me. If it takes a broken spirit and embarrassment, that's okay.

Harold Wenger
Mt. Joy, Pa.

After reading this article, I am somewhat confused. Does the author imply that one may be a Christian and have the Spirit of God living inside and yet not be "born again" as Jesus tried to explain to Nicodemus? Was the author's life before conversion only an acting out of the Christian life? If not, then what does he gain by being "born again"?

Ted Koontz gives the impression that his experience was a first-time happening. Then he goes on to describe his experience as a "conversion" and says he needs more converting. Is he saying that the new birth, as he describes it, happens many times in life?

Maybe he doesn't always live in springtime. But what does it matter if the presence of God dwells in our hearts because of the new birth experience which God wrought through Christ as an expression of his grace and or submission to his will.

James L. Kropf
Phoenix, Ariz.

their kids and sponsors. In many other quiet ways these persons nudged young people to consider Mennonite education. But these services no longer exist in any substantial way in many conferences.

The Friends of Mennonite Higher Education have a real challenge to reverse a trend that has been encouraged and enhanced by earlier shortsighted decisions.

Jesse Glick
Elkhart, Ind.

Reading the letters in the Feb. 6 issue about the item ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . (Jan. 9) again saddened and, I must admit, more than a little angered me by what homosexual Christians in the Mennonite Church continue to have to endure.

Gospel Herald is condemned for giving space to a group that represents a minority viewpoint. But since when is this publication only for the voice of the majority? It calls itself "the weekly magazine of the Mennonite Church." *Gospel Herald* cannot be that if it does not give space to minority voices.

If it were only a voice for the majority, then neither Jesus nor the Anabaptists would be heard. For these represented minority convictions. Sometimes the minority turns out to be right.

Brad Moyer
San Diego, Calif.

As a parent, I couldn't help but notice how promptly and callously four letters in the Feb. 6 issue put down our gay children.

Clif Kenagy
Albany, Ore.

Promise Keepers: a Movement of Hope—and a Wellspring of Debate (Feb. 6) seems to be yet another example of missing major blessings by probing for a possible flaw in content or strategy.

As we left the Promise Keepers' gathering of 50,000 men in St. Petersburg, Fla., our hearts were warmed and blessed beyond our words. We had the blessing and anointing of the Holy Spirit unlike we had previously experienced.

Our local monthly gatherings of Promise Keepers are beautiful: Man-to-man, shoulder-to-shoulder, praising God, challenging each other to deeper commitment to God and family, praying, confessing, receiving forgiveness, and much more. It's awesome!

But don't take our word. Ask our wives. Or the wives of other Promise Keepers. For these are truly promise reapers.

We suppose there will always be among us those who dissect and criticize, always looking for the pit in the cherry pie. We confess that we've been guilty of the same. But Paul helps us focus when, in Phil. 1:15-18, he says: "It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry. . . . But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached."

Praise God for all he is doing in our church and community, through Promise Keepers, and everywhere else people are giving their hearts to Jesus and sharing him with others.

Loren J. Zehr
Jerold Diller
Cape Coral, Fla.

Promise Keepers: a Movement of Hope—and a Wellspring of Debate (Feb. 6). Today's seminary-trained leaders are good at determining what people's needs are. But they are slow to know how to help them fill these needs.

So laymen have had to spearhead movements like Promise Keepers. In their businesses, they have learned how to effectively give witness to their Christian faith and how to lead large groups of people to work together to accomplish a common goal.

The greatest need for Promise Keepers is to emphasize that love is the primary way for us to relate to all people: wives, children, races, nationalities. We Anabaptist Christians have been taught that from birth.

If we are interested in seeing Promise Keepers adopt love as a primary motivating force in human relations, then we must get on board the train! If we miss it, we'll find ourselves standing on the station platform talking to each other. And God will have a difficult time using us from that position.

Joel Troyer
Greentown, Ind.

Within the Christian community, I struggle with the limited ways we apply some of Roman J. Miller's principles in his article, ***Facing Tough Questions About the Beginning of Life*** (Feb. 13). This is particularly true in our protecting and helping "the weak, helpless, and powerless among us."

I have known believers who actively proclaim the pro-life. But after insisting on the births of "unwanted" children, where are the Christians protesting child abuse, lobbying governments for stronger child welfare laws, or inviting the abused into their homes as foster children?

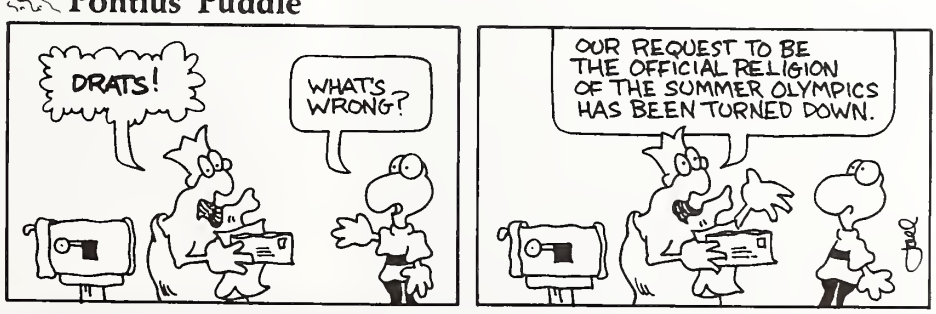
As a caseworker in a Christian foster-care agency, I struggle daily with the limited family resources we have for all the children in need. We insist that our government should enable all children to be born. But then we leave the government to "protect" them once their lives have begun.

As a Christian I value life, would never choose abortion, nor counsel anyone to consider it. But I can't help but wonder if it would not have been better for many of these children to have gone straight into the arms of God and skipped the misery this life has given to them.

I agree that we must protect the unborn. But that protection cannot end at birth.

Wendy Hoke Witmer
Manheim, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle



Letters to the editor of 'The

Dear Editor-in-Chief:

I think you should sack that columnist, Mark what's-his-name, because all he and your other writers talk about is money, money, money! Of the 38 parables of Jesus your first four columnists cite, at least a dozen are devoted to our use of material goods! I've gone over your paper with a fine-tooth comb, and one out of every eight of those numbered paragraphs deals with money! I think your writers have an ax to grind.

It's getting so bad that some churches are starting to resemble advertising agencies. Aren't we missing the point? I like to give when the Spirit moves, not because of some slick come-on. And if I don't agree with what's going on in the church, I just decrease my level of support. If I'm not being fed, I don't give; it's as simple as that!

To come back to that front-page story you did on that widow, surely it's not the editorial policy of your paper that all of us give away all our possessions. I don't know anyone who can consistently give everything he or she has to God without starving to death. It's an impossible ethic!

My first obligation is to provide food and shelter for my family. We don't exactly want for the necessities of life, but there are a lot of things we could use, and that's my first obligation! I deserve what I have. I've worked hard for it, as did my parents and grandparents before me! Doesn't it say in the Bible that if we work hard and save our money, God will bless us with even more material things?

I'm grateful for all my material blessings, and I'm not afraid to show it. On Thanksgiving Sunday, the service made me feel so good I put a hundred dollars in the offering plate! That's how it should be. If people leave church feeling good, they'll give.

Stingy Christian
Comfort, Ohio

by Don Friesen

Dear Editor-in-Chief:

I wish to respond to the story you ran in the first edition of your paper, the story of Abraham and Lot. It's captivating because while nowadays the trend is toward business mergers, those two gentlemen found it necessary to arrange a severance of their property. It makes a lot of sense to me—the land they shared could no longer support their huge herds, and their hired helpers were beginning to tread on each other's toes.

What I found intriguing was your report of the manner in which they divided the land. Abraham said to Lot, "If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." A rather magnanimous offer, I should think, and one which Lot lost no time in exercising to his own advantage.

I would have expected you to hold Abraham up as a paragon of generous living. But some other stories you did showed that Abraham's conduct was not consistently generous. According to the statement you took from him,

Heavenly Financial Times'

Dear Editor-in-Chief:

I was appalled and furious when I read the letter from that guy in Comfort, Ohio. I could not disagree with him more! He says he likes to give as the Spirit moves; has he tried paying his taxes that way? If we care enough to belong to an organization, especially one dedicated to supporting the purpose of God, then we must realize this requires more than offerings based on "good feelings"!

If "Comfort" thought the story about the widow was so unusual, he should have read some of the other columns—like the story about a boy whose meager lunch went a long way to satisfying the hunger of the crowd. If those who have little give a lot, why shouldn't we, who have a lot, give even more?

I believe that stewardship is what you do after you say, "I believe." Martin Luther said that three conversions are necessary for a Christian—conversion of the head, conversion of the heart, and conversion of the purse. As a measure of our Christian commitment, our pocketbook is just as important as our hymnbook.

I liked that article you ran by Dr. Luke about that little tax collector. When he met Jesus, it not only made him feel good about himself, it also made him feel so bad about his financial situation that he felt good about doing something to rectify the situation. Jesus' summary: "Today salvation has come to this house." Salvation, it appears, is not unrelated to the way we handle our money!

One of the things that upsets me about my own congregation is in the inequity of giving. I resent the fact that many people give less than I do even though everyone is in the same salary range. We no longer challenge people to give sacrificially, and it's beginning to show—the younger generations are much less generous than their forebears.

As a Christian, I think we have an obligation to support people in need. The Bible asks us to be responsible caretakers of our possessions for the sake of God's kingdom.

Resentful Christian
Generosity Cove, Nfld.

what motivated Abraham's generous offer was his relationship to Lot. He said, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herders and my herders; for we are kindred." Abraham's action resolved the conflict and ensured a peaceful relationship. Abraham's aim was not "generosity" per se but shalom—the restoration of harmony.

In that respect—regarding shalom as an "ethical good"—your paper is consistent. It's a concept that carries the freight of a dream of God that resists all tendencies to division, hostility, fear, and misery. This concept is helpful in shaping our notions of stewardship, including financial stewardship.

Were the concept of shalom to become the guide for our financial dealings, it wouldn't make much difference whether we tithe or where charity begins; what's important is that we devote our resources to the well-being, the shalom of all people and that there be no strife among any of God's kindred. If, like Abraham, I recognize my kinship with all humanity, then stewardship becomes a tool in searching for a solution to our common plight.

A Christian

Don Friesen is minister of the Ottawa (Ont.) Mennonite Church, father of three teenagers, and husband of Dorothy Deckel Friesen. This article first appeared in the May 1995 issue of Nexus, *a publication of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.*

Will all the king's horses and all the king's men be able to put Bosnia back together again?

by J. Robert Charles

In no area of human activity is hope more fragile, or optimism more difficult to sustain, than in international politics. Studying it has been compared to working in the pathology department of a hospital. Long before Bosnia came to our front pages and television screens, philosopher Immanuel Kant said, "Human nature ever seems less lovable than in the relations among entire peoples."

To put the matter theologically, the political life of our world provides scanty evidence to sustain our belief that, through Christ's death and resurrection, God's love has overcome the power of sin and evil.

Nothing new or surprising in this, it's true—just the poignant reminder that peacemaking holds no guarantee of success of effectiveness. Yet our hearts still sink and our hopes still deflate every time a fragile peace is broken anywhere, be it in Belfast or Burundi.

What then about the limited, imperfect peace in Bosnia that now has held, however shakily, for nearly three months? How should we view the delicate Balkan balance which has us holding our breaths and praying at one and the same time? What, if anything, can we allow ourselves to hope?

Public declarations of good faith there have been, but they ring hollow. When taken to the "woodshed" in Rome by the U.S. and its allies, the presidents of Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia recommitted themselves to "full compliance" with the peace treaty signed last December. Yet developments on the ground seem to bear out the cynical quip that, in international affairs, "peace" is but "a period of cheating between two periods of fighting."

In short—and the dictum that "there has never been a good war or a bad peace" notwithstanding—Bosnia's present peace holds little promise of being a good one.

For one thing, it is an imposed peace. It has been dictated by an outside world that finally had its fill. It is a truce forced on warring parties that still view each other with deep suspicion—parties whose mutually incompatible political aims have now been stymied.

The three presidents signed the Dayton accords with all the ecstasy of a child forced to swallow cod liver oil. The Bosnia president said, "My government is taking part in this agreement without any enthusiasm but as someone taking a bitter yet useful potion or medicine." Sadly, these sentiments are perhaps all he and his counterparts share.

Then too, this is a "Humpty-Dumpty" peace. In this case, the king's horses and men trying—at least officially—to put shattered Bosnia back together again are the 60,000 NATO troops there to insure implementation of the Dayton accords.

Have they any hope of helping create a viable political entity out of the Muslim, Serb, and Croat fragments that are each becoming more "ethnically pure" by the day, especially when the last two hope to link up with neighboring Serbia and Croatia? After all, Bosnia's task in Tito's now-vanished Yugoslavia, according to Liljana Smaljovic, was "to be its guardian, the keeper of the 'holy grail' of brotherhood and unity" to show that Yugloslavia itself was "a good and workable idea, that all nations could live under one roof, in harmony and peace."

With the great fall of Yugoslavia, putting Bosnia back together seems a quixotic quest at best. And what will happen when all the king's horses and men exit next year?

Still, while far from a good peace, for the beleaguered people of Bosnia, this is far better than the terrible war that otherwise would still be desolating their land and lives.

Only those who would make a wilderness and call it peace could disagree with Eric Hobsbawm: "Any peace that ends four years of war in a country of four million—a war that has killed people by the hundreds of thousands, forced them to flee by the multitudes, and left a civil society in ruins—must be welcomed."

And who knows? Maybe, just maybe, this time optimism can be sustained, hope maintained, even against all odds.

Perhaps this imposed peace *can* change behavior just enough to allow fears to subside, attitudes to begin to mend, a few first modest steps toward reconciliation to be taken both behind closed doors and on the public square.

Perhaps Bosnia's imperfect peace *can* give just enough time and space for a healing fountain to start to flow in the ravaged lives, hearts, and spirits of its people.

Perhaps this imposed peace can change behavior and give just enough time and space for a healing fountain to start to flow in ravaged lives, hearts, and spirits.

MCC workers in Burundi move to more volatile area

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Two Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) peace presence volunteers in Burundi have recently moved to Bubanza, a town near the site of fierce fighting between the Tutsi army and Hutu rebel militia.

"MCC has made the decision to accept the risks involved in the interest of encouraging peace," says Lauren Yoder, MCC Burundi country co-representative.

More volatile area. Why Bubanza? It is a small-enough place that our actions would be very visible," explain Keith Miller and Susan Seitz, who requested the transfer. "Bubanza seems to us at the heart of Burundi's problems and therefore the logical place to act. If things could turn around there, we could foresee a spill-over effect."

MCC staff ask for prayer for Miller of Nairobi, Kenya, and Seitz of Holt, Mich. "Pray for their safety and effectiveness in helping Burundians find peaceful ways to resolve conflict," requests Eric Olfert, MCC Africa co-secretary, who notes the first month or two will be most risky as the MCC workers' presence may be met with initial suspicion.

Seitz, a nurse, will do community health education in conjunction with the Bubanza's Roman Catholic hospital. She and Miller will also organize peace activities, including inter-ethnic peace committees in which community leaders can share information and search for ways to resolve disputes. Both recently served in similar assignments in Kibimba, Burundi.

"We concluded Kibimba is now on the track to peace, and we should put into place similar structures in a more volatile area," the two wrote in a recent fax.

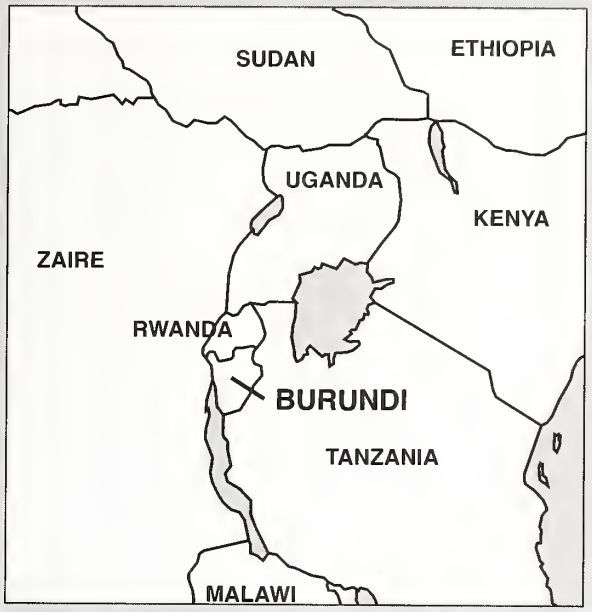
Bubanza's Catholic bishop, its governor, and city administrator have welcomed MCC workers.

After careful consideration. U.S. government representatives have urged nongovernmental organizations not to place workers in much of rural Burundi. MCC's decision to place workers in Bubanza was made after careful consideration, staff say.

MCC administrators met with Burundian Quaker church leader David Niyonzima, who was in North America at MCC's annual meeting in February. "We need all the people you can send us to help us be true to our ideals of how people should relate. If you wait until Bubanza is completely safe, the MCC workers will not be needed there," Niyonzima told MCC administrators.

Niyonzima said he thinks expatriates are not in great danger unless they are perceived as taking sides.

—Pearl Sensenig



Approximately 800 people are dying in the East African country of Burundi each month, according to a United Nations' estimate. Rwanda's southern neighbor has a population of about 85 percent Hutu and 15 percent Tutsi. Ethnic tension between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 caused widespread genocide, and 1.5 million Rwandans are still encamped outside their country's borders. Two Mennonite Central Committee peace workers are moving to a more volatile area of Burundi.

Mennonite Disaster Service reports:

Year-end appeal aids victims of 'silent disasters'

Reedley, Calif. (MDS)—A review of 1995 disaster relief work brought 379 delegates to Mennonite Disaster Service's (MDS) all-unit meeting here Feb. 9-10.

Funding was a serious concern of MDS in 1995, reported secretary Lynette Meck. MDS's expansion of staff during a time of new opportunities and increased donations put them in a difficult position as donations dropped toward the end of 1995.

Unprecendented fund appeal. "With big storms like hurricanes Andrew and Hugo and the Midwest floods, the news media did our fundraising for us," pointed out Region I director Paul Brubacher. "But suddenly the news media wasn't there. We had silent disasters."

The board made an unprecedented appeal for funds in December, with a goal of raising $100,000 by the end of the year, said Brubacher. The goal was met and by the end of January, contributions totaled $206,000.

Executive director Lowell Detweiler introduced the delegates to several new staff members, as well as new ways MDS is using the Internet, fax machines, and a toll-free number to improve communication.

Norman Supancheck of Fillmore, Calif., spoke on the theme of the weekend, "A Time to Build," in a Friday banquet. He said it was time to build on Jan. 17, 1994, when "we got up and saw our whole city was destroyed."

The Northridge earthquake damaged or destroyed some 700 of the homes in this city of 1,200 people. "People came to God because they saw in you people serving Jesus, living what God has called us to," he said.

Delegates also heard stories of hurricane repairs in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands; tornado damage in Whiton, Ala.; and flood projects in Albany, Ga., among others. Several speakers pointed out that MDS volunteers' role in these disasters included building relationships.

"You may feel impelled to shovel the debris, but maybe it's more important that you lean on that shovel and listen and share the pain," said Friday's keynote speaker Elmer Martens.

—Kathy Heinrichs West

London bombings shatter dreams of reconciliation for Mennonite worker

The Irish Republican Army has broken its 17-month ceasefire with three bombs since Feb. 9, killing three people and endangering the peace process that would lead eventually to all-party negotiations, according to an article in Newsweek. *This reflection is written by Joe Liechty, who leads a research project exploring sectarianism and religious conflict in Northern Ireland through Mennonite Board of Missions in Dublin.*—Editor

When I heard the news that the Irish Republican Army had set off a huge bomb in London, Friday evening, Feb. 9, I was at home in Dublin playing pool with my son Aaron.

I just kept playing pool.

The news sounded as if it came from another planet, and I seemed to have no tools, emotional or intellectual, for dealing with the information. Despite knowing the difficulties, despite receiving ample warnings from friends with good IRA connections that a frustrated IRA was likely to resume violence, none of it prepared me for the actual event.

Saturday and Sunday I read the newspapers and tried to start making sense of the situation, but there was little hard news to go on, and initial speculation about the significance of the bombing ranged, and continues to range, from "it's a 'once-off' reminder" to "it's day one of Armageddon."

Return to old ways? Early Monday morning I left Dublin for my weekly ritual of a couple days in Northern Ireland. As the train headed north, reality and depression settled on me as I thought about the possible implications of the bombing. By the time we got to Dundalk, a bomb threat meant that we had to get in buses and drive around the supposed bomb site before continuing the journey by train from Newry.

Bomb threats to the Dublin-Belfast line, and sometimes actual bombs, were a regular feature of pre-cease-fire life and a blessed absence for 17 months. So this new bomb threat, following so quickly after the bomb in London, served as a bleak and potent symbol of the possible return to old ways.

Monday and Tuesday in Belfast are ordinarily pretty intense workdays as Sister Cecelia Clegg, my co-worker on the Moving Beyond Sectarianism project, and I pull together what we have been doing separately and plan for the future. These two days, however, we and others seemed to feel a compulsion just to talk about what the bombing might mean: for our work, for our friends, for Northern Ireland, for Britain and Ireland. We went first to a hastily convened, scarcely publicized noontime peace rally at Belfast City Hall, which quickly swelled to 3,000 participants.

Back in the office, many Christians working for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland came by to talk a while. In the evening I joined many friends at a public lecture and discussion on the role of the churches in building peace in Northern Ireland.

All the talking and contact raised my spirits, anyway, and I hope others', partly because of insights gained. But even more because it reminded me that to be a Christian engaged in peace work in Northern Ireland is to be part of a large, strong network of wonderful people whose work is rooted in their faith.

'The glass is still very dark.' But whatever comfort I received, I certainly gained little clarity and saw little around me. The London bombing shattered not only lives and buildings but also hopes, dreams, and plans. Right now the pieces are still drifting back to the ground, and it is just too early to say with any confidence where they will fall or in what pattern. For the time being, those who can hope at all must base it on faith, because the glass we see through is still very, very dark.

—*Joe Liechty*

Returning to the rubble. *Monrovia, Liberia (MBM)*—Steve Wiebe-Johnson and two of his former neighbors look out the window of his former office in the home his family lived in while in Liberia from September 1989 to May 1990. Nearly six years after they were evacuated because of Liberia's civil war, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers Steve and Dorothy Wiebe-Johnson visited what was left of their home.

The Wiebe-Johnsons and their two children toured their ransacked home and renewed acquaintances Jan. 2-6 in the West African nation in preparation for MBM's ongoing work there. Their former home had been stripped not only of their personal belongings but right down to the wood trim by Liberians seeking fuel resources for survival. "Liberia is still a long way from being settled," the Wiebe-Johnsons wrote in a recent letter. "There is peace, or a lack of war, at present."

Even without MBM personnel stationed on Liberian soil, MBM's support of partner agencies in Liberia has continued. Although the Wiebe-Johnsons' primary ministry is in Benin, the couple will visit Liberia regularly to support MBM partner organizations there. Two church leaders of the independent churches in Liberia will also study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.—*Tom Price*

Praying hands. *Hesston, Kan. (HC)*—Candy Dave of Wichita, Kan., uses Native American sign language to express the meaning of the Lord's Prayer during the closing session of the Global Issues Seminar at Hesston College on Feb. 15. The two-day seminar offered historic and contemporary views of Native Americans and featured workshops, film festivals, and a coffeehouse. Speakers discussed Native American health issues, control of the federal government over American Indians, and Native folklore, dance, and lifestyles. Participants also viewed the film *You Chiefs Are Peacemakers* depicting Cheyenne chiefs who have served as peacemakers for their tribe.

MCC U.S. board debates fundraising approaches

Calgary, Alta. (MCC)—The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. board approved a 1996 budget of $4.48 million at its Feb. 15 annual meeting.

The 1996 budget is based on U.S. contributions totaling $12.4 million, a 6 percent increase over the $11.7 million received in 1995.

Traditionally, the largest share of income for MCC U.S. comes from contributions—some 83 percent in 1995. This level of giving was an encouraging sign in a year with no major, high-profile disasters, said Ken Langeman, MCC controller.

The MCC U.S. budget funds community ministries, peace and justice ministries, constituency ministries, and four regional offices.

Special fundraising efforts such as relief sales, shops, and Houses Against Hunger are expected to be sources of growth in contributions in 1996.

Board members discussed new approaches to fundraising in response to a presentation by Brenda Wagner of constituency ministries and Berry Friesen, director of administration and resources for MCC U.S.

Vernon Jantzi of Harrisonburg, Va., cautioned against too much emphasis on special fundraising efforts. "We must not lose accountability and responsiveness to the churches," he stressed. "The temptation is to become independent and then to impose program on the churches."

"There is a danger of moving away from the faith-based process of the past," said Emerson Peckman of Chambersburg, Pa. "It's starting to sound like we look at MCC as a business, but we are not a business."

Kathi Oswald of Fresno, Calif., suggested that MCC and MCC U.S. executive committees discuss a philosophy of fundraising. "Many agencies ask for money," she said, "but we need to ask what is important about how MCC asks for money."

Kids raised enough money to buy 83 chickens for people in rural areas of South Africa. Through a "Pennies for Peeps" program at First Mennonite Church, Allentown, Pa., Sunday school children collected $250 worth of pennies in six months. The vision to buy chickens to help in farm development among South African villagers began with Rommel Roberts, a Quaker community development worker, who last year visited Mennonite friends in New Jersey. "If there is anything Mennonites know about, it is farming," was their response, and the project began last Easter. Roberts visited the congregation in February and showed the children pictures of the chickens they had purchased.
—*submitted by Leslie Mangine Rafaniello*

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A study of jazz helped earn Ben Yost, a senior English major at Goshen (Ind.) College, a place on the third squad of the All-USA College Academic Teams, published in the Feb. 8 issue of *USA Today*. The newspaper honored 60 students from 1,231 nominees selected by their colleges. Yost submitted a résumé, grade transcripts, and an essay describing his most "significant intellectual endeavor." He cited his research on the cultural connections between jazz and music of West Africa and Europe, made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Yost attends College Mennonite Church with his parents, Don and Elaine Shertz Yost.
—*from* The Goshen News

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Survivors of domestic abuse can find transitional housing through a new program in Wichita, Kan., called New Hope of Wichita, Inc. Mennonite Housing has teamed up with the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita, two Catholic orders. Mennonite Housing furnishes office space for New Hope and locates and rehabilitates housing opportunities.—*from* The Mennonite

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Selling tomatoes was how it all began for members of the Christian Peacemaker Team in the West Bank. They set up a table in a closed market, hoping the action would encourage a reopening of the market and a revitalization of the economy. The market was closed to the Muslim population after a 1994 massacre at a nearby mosque by a Jewish settler. According to the Oslo II Accords, the market should have been re-opened. Israeli soldiers moved the table into the street and tried to block sales of the tomatoes, but all were eventually sold. "We chose tomatoes," says team member Jeff Heie, "on the advice of a local Palestinian friend who said they would not hurt as much if someone threw them at us."—*Christian Peacemaker Teams*

The 'Mennonite game' changes:

MCC U.S. board shares about racism concerns

Calgary, Alta. (MCC U.S.)—The "Mennonite game" is changing, said Lawrence Hart at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. annual meeting here Feb. 15. Referring to the "Who are you?" and "Where are you from?" questions common in Mennonite and Brethren in Christ circles, Hart said the "game" is no longer based on genetics. Rather than being tied only to a family, a person's identity is now often tied to where they have served with MCC or another mission or development organization.

Broadening the vision. Hart's comments were part of the board's extended discussion of and response to "Broadening the Vision"—the commitment of MCC U.S. to address hatred and discord between people of different races and ethnicities in the United States. The day's discussions were interwoven with songs, prayers, and poetry from various cultures and languages.

While some see a new inclusiveness in Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches, much work remains to be done, said numerous participants. "The talk needs to be internalized," said Natalie Wing of Fresno, Calif. " 'Non-ethnic [Mennonite]' refers to social and economic differences as well as cultural differences; we all need to open our hearts and our doors to people who are not like us, while at the same time affirming the Mennonite church."

Learning from everyone. " 'Broadening the Vision' gives me hope," said Wilma Bailey of Grantham, Pa. "It's a deliberate attempt to make some changes, to prepare for the bold new steps we are making into new territory."

Among the "bold new steps" Bailey referred to is a new model of MCC U.S. service unit. Located in an inner-city, the unit will include volunteers from that community as well as from the more traditional MCC constituency. The goal of the new model is to promote understanding and acceptance within a multiethnic group working together to serve others.

Board members discussed ways for MCC U.S. board and staff to talk about the initiative with people in MCC's constituency. "It's not good enough to just invite minority groups into what we're already doing," said Tim Lind of Three Rivers, Mich. "We need to find ways of learning from everyone, including minorities."

At the meeting, board members watched a new MCC video *Free Indeed,* introduced by MCC U.S. staff member Jody Miller Shearer as a "tool for people to talk about white privilege in America."

Responses included defensiveness and frustration with perspectives in the video, but also hope. "I have hope because of the many people here who are struggling deeply and sincerely with this issue [of racism]," said Kathi Oswald of Fresno, Calif. "It has to start here, and we need to take this issue to the churches."

Guatemalan woman killed. *San Lucas, Guatemala*—Doña Manuela, shown in this photograph printed in the Feb. 20 issue of *Gospel Herald,* was struck and killed by a bus on Monday, Feb. 5, as she walked home from work along the Pan-American highway.

Kerri and Fred Garner, Mennonite Central Committee workers in Guatemala, worked with Doña Manuela. Fred wrote this letter to *Gospel Herald* about her life: "Like most indigenous Guatemalan women, her life was not left unaffected by the violent civil conflict here. Her first husband disappeared in the early 80's, only to be found a few days later macheted to death by soldiers. She soon fled with her three children from her childhood home in El Quiché province to the outskirts of the capital. There her second husband abandoned her with two more children, forcing her to support them all doing housework. Eventually she found a custodial job at CEDESCRI [Center of Christian Services].

"The weight of her suffering and pain was evident to all who knew her, but it was never quite enough to snuff out the humble sweetness of her spirit and her desire to give generously to all out of the little she had without expecting anything in return."

Fred writes that her five children and two grandchildren were taken in by the family of a co-worker. "The willingness of this co-worker and his wife to take in—indefinitely—seven more children into their current family of five has spoken to us of what it really means to serve the poor and those in need. When asked why, the family replies, 'The time has come for the suffering in this family to stop.' "

Elaine Zook Barge, MCC country co-representative in Guatemala, reports that a fund has been set up to assist Doña Manuela's children. Donations can be wired to Banco Industrial (7a Avenida, 5-10, Zona 4, Guatemala 01004) and deposited in account #00-464213-8, under the name of Centro de Servicios Cristianos (CEDESCRI). Telex: 5236 BAINSAGU.

Charitable donations continue upward trend

Goshen, Ind. (MMA)—Charities benefited from nearly $12 million donated through Mennonite Foundation in 1995. In addition, $24 million was given to the foundation for future distribution to charities.

"The numbers we are reporting for 1995 are somewhat less than in 1994, but that is largely due to a single multi-million-dollar gift given in 1994," says J. B. Miller, executive director. When that single large gift is factored out, he says, "it shows charitable giving through the foundation is still on the upward trend we have experienced for a number of years."

New contributions. New contributions to gift plans totaled $24 million in 1995, compared to $21.9 million in 1993 and $28 million in 1994. These funds will eventually be distributed to qualified charities recommended by the donors.

A total of $11,784,415 was distributed to more than 1,000 churches and other charities in 1995, compared to $8 million distributed in 1993 and $22 million in 1994. Twenty-five percent of the funds went to educational institutions, 23 percent to local congregations, 13 percent to missions and relief, 5 percent to hospitals and retirement homes, 5 percent to conferences and districts, and 29 percent to other charitable organizations. Over 70 percent of the money was contributed to Mennonite-related organizations.

Some 5,000 households give. Total assets of Mennonite Foundation increased to $218 million, up from $197.6 million in 1994. Funds being managed by Mennonite Foundation for more than 100 other church organizations increased by $7 million to a total of $117 million.

Gifts made to Mennonite Foundation came in several forms including 34 percent as real estate, 30 percent as securities, 24 percent as cash, 7 percent from bequests, and 5 percent as farm commodities.

Approximately 5,000 households now give to charity through Mennonite Foundation programs.

Total participation in the charitable bequest plans is 3,007. This plan allows people to name Mennonite Foundation as the charitable beneficiary in their wills.—*Steve Bowers*

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- **Mennonite woman missing.** A 25-year-old Mennonite doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore was apparently abducted from her car near Culpeper, Va., while traveling to meet her mother in Charlottesville, Va., March 2. Alicia Showalter Reynolds was still missing March 7, but her car was found beside U.S. 29. A 1992 graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, she is married to Mark Reynolds, a graduate student at the University of Maryland, and is the daughter of Harley and Sadie Showalter of Harrisonburg, Va.

- **CPTers respond to violence.** Two members of a Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) in Hebron were arrested and jailed for two days after they and two other CPTers protested the demolition of a Palestinian home by the Israeli Defense Force—an action that violated the Oslo peace accords. Team members also planned to ride bus 18 in Jerusalem for several hours on March 10. The commuter bus route has been the target of suicide bombing attacks two weeks in a row.

- **MBM 1711 Center closed.** About 75 people closed Mennonite Board of Missions' (MBM) history at 1711 Prairie St. on Feb. 23 with a service of celebration. The quarter-block complex was sold Nov. 21 to Elkhart Housing Partnership, which helps provide low-income, single-family housing.

- **Applications received.** Applications are being received until April 30 for the annual award from the June Schwartzentruber Fund, designed to assist people in church-related service, particularly in peace and justice concerns, urban ministry, and cross-cultural projects. For more information, contact Mary Burkholder, Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, at 519 650-3806.

- **Arts newsletter begins.** Plans for a newsletter from the Association of Mennonites in the Arts are underway. It will be edited by Cynthia Yoder, New York City. The association currently has 400 members. For more information, contact Philip K. Clemens, 17716 Route 89, Corry, PA 16407.

- **New appointments:**

Bechler, Curtis T., special assistant to the president at Bethel (Kan.) College.

Luke Hartman, men's basketball coach, Hesston (Kan.) College.

- **Pastor transitions:**

B. Frank Byler was installed as interim pastor at the Mennonite Church of Warsaw (Ind.).

- **Coming events:**

Youth Ministry '96, a retreat for adults in Christian youth ministry, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., March 29-31. Carlos Romero, youth convention coordinator for Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, will speak on "Vision: Healing and Hope." Includes workshops, displays, and recreation. More information and registration available from Camp Hebron at 717 896-3441 or 800 864-7747.

C. Henry Smith Lecture by Lauren Friesen, drama professor at Goshen (Ind.) College, March 12, Apr. 3, and Apr. 16. "Three Contemporary American Playwrights on Race, Violence, and Reconciliation" combines lecture with short scenes by student actors. Contact Goshen College at 219 535-7571 for more information.

Pastors' conference, Goshen (Ind.) College, May 8-9. "The Word Among Us: Teaching the Bible in the Congregation and Classroom" includes workshops and discussion. Contact Sheldon Burkhalter at 219 535-7536 for more information.

- **New books:**

Flatlands, a book of poetry by Jeff Gundy, is now available from Cleveland State University. Information on orders is available from 216 687-3986.

- **Job openings:**

Administrator, Hartville (Ohio) Meadows, an ICF-MR facility. Business background with computer knowledge required, two years of administrative and management background in health care field preferred. Send résumé and salary requirements to Hartville Meadows, 844 Sunnyside St. S.W., Hartville, OH 44632: attn. personnel committee.

Admissions counselor, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Full-time, 10-month position responsible for recruitment primarily at Mennonite high schools. Bachelor's degree required, training in marketing and sales helpful. Willingness to travel regularly and work irregular evening and weekend hours. Application deadline is April 5. Contact EMU human resources office at 540 432-4108; e-mail: EbyBJ@EMU.edu

Director for peace and justice resources, Commission on Home Ministries, Newton, Kan. Half-time position available after July 1 to develop peace and justice resources to General Conference Mennonite congregations and area conferences. For more information and application, contact Lois Barrett, Commission on Home Ministries, 316 283-5100; e-mail: loisb@gcmc.org

Elementary teachers, Kraybill Mennonite School, Mount Joy, Pa. First- and third-grade teachers and part-time middle school computer and language arts teacher needed. Contact administrator John Weber at 598 Kraybill Church Rd., Mount Joy, PA 17552; phone 717 653-5236.

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A quilted confession of faith. *Waynesboro, Va.*—Anna Mary Burkholder (left) and Ann Showalter examine the legacy quilt at the back of the sanctuary of Springdale Mennonite Church here. Some 26 church members devoted more than a 1,000 hours of work over three years to bring the "stained glass" legacy quilt to reality. On Feb. 18, the colorful 106 inch by 83 inch appliqued quilt was unveiled during the morning worship service. "Our concern from the start was that the quilt have a spiritual emphasis and not just be decorative," says Showalter. The quilt displays 12 symbols that the congregation deems central aspects of Christian faith, including a cross and crown (eternal life), towel and basin (servanthood), fish (discipleship), and water (baptism).—*Jim Bishop*

Faculty position in music department and preparatory program, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., beginning Fall 1996. One-half to three-quarter time responsibilities include conducting university chamber and preparatory program youth orchestras, string instruction, and instrumental methods classes for music education students. Send letter of application and résumé by March 31 to Lee Snyder, vice-president and academic dean, EMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Teaching positions, Bethany Christian Middle School, Goshen, Ind. Sixth-grade teacher with elementary license, and seventh- and eighth-grade teachers with middle school endorsement and primary strengths in math, science, language arts, and social studies. Contact principal Allan Dueck, 219 534-2567.

Voluntary service position, International Guest House, Washington, D.C. One-year position for single person opens the beginning of May. The guest house is a mission project of Allegheny Mennonite Conference. Contact the International Guest House, 1441 Kennedy St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20011; phone 202 726-5808.

NEW MEMBERS

Gulfhaven, Gulfport, Miss.: Dan Burgess and Julie Burgess.

Lombard, Ill.: Thom and Jill Knudsen, Jennifer Manley, Carlen Sellers, John Yoder, and Joanne Good.

Michigan Avenue, Pigeon, Mich.: Kristina Swartzendruber, Karin Shetler, Mike Frazho, and Laurene Frazho.

South Hutchinson, Kan.: Zella Adrian, Melody Bontrager, Valerie Bontrager, Mark Darrah, Glenna Egli, Tom Egli, Ray Garver, Ezra Miller, Ruby Miller, Jim Yutzy, and Linda Yutzy.

Tedrow, Wauseon, Ohio: Max and Michelle Wyse.

BIRTHS

Albrecht, Cheryl Litwiller and Barry, Sebewaing, Mich., Ashlyn Rae (third child), Feb. 2.

Beachy, DiAnn Bontrager and David, Goshen, Ind., Kelsey Ranae (third child), Feb. 18.

Blackford, Becky Jantzen and Dan, Orrville, Ohio, Paige Jean (second child), Jan. 17.

Boyes, Eunice Miller and Steve, Akron, Ohio, Emma Jane (second child), Jan. 30.

Burkholder, Karen R. Frankenfield and Kenneth R., Harleysville, Pa., Alyssa Renee (first child), Feb. 20.

Conway, Bonnie Kwant and Harold, Philadelphia, Pa., Britton Daniel (first child), Feb. 19.

Derstine, Rebecca Burkholder and Blaine, Washington, D.C., Caleb Christian (second child), Feb. 12.

Dilcher, Heather and Bryan, Avondale, Pa., Hannah (second child), Dec. 27.

Gascho, Tammy Schwartz and Kevin, Burr Oak, Mich., McKayla Anne (second child), Feb. 17.

Good, Rhonda Witmer and Edward, Lancaster, Pa., Angela Megan (first child), Jan. 29.

Grieser, Rosemary Goesch and Sam, Jefferson, Ore., Jeremiah Jesse (third child), Feb. 9.

Hooley, Tanya Rice and Casey, Albany, Ore., Jamin Joel (first child), Feb. 15.

Jiroun, Laura Brubaker and Abdula, Laurel, Md., Adam Abdula (second child), Feb. 15.

Knepp, Melissa Petula and Shane, Sarasota, Fla., Jesse Shane (first child), Feb. 18.

Metzler, Erin Smith and George, Atglen, Pa., Erika Janae (first child), Jan. 28.

Moyer, Jennifer L. and Todd M., Souderton, Pa., Jillian Leigh (second child), Feb. 12.

Rice, Sharon Mengle and Gerald, Mt. Pleasant Mills, Pa., Tony Weston (fourth child), Feb. 10.

Saleh, Mary Garber and Faisal, Wilsonville, Ore., Rashad Faisal (second child), Jan. 29.

Shearer, Renee Delorm and David, Doylestown, Ohio, Cameron Daniel (third child), Jan. 21.

Stawson, Tracy Baton and Mark, Pittsburgh, Pa., Thandiwe Elizabeth (second child), Feb. 19.

Stoltzfus, Jeanette Gerig and Paul, Newberg, Ore., Micah James (third child), Feb. 14.

Vincent, Carrie Jo and George, Canby, Ore., Joanna Marianne (second child), Feb. 13.

Walt, Nancy Chavez and Darrin, Harleysville, Pa., Sierra Rose (first child), Feb. 19.

MARRIAGES

Gronhovd-Schrock: Sheri Gronhovd, Glendale, Ariz., and Jim Schrock, Phoenix, Ariz. (Trinity), Feb. 17, by Stanley Shantz.

King-Rupp: Phillip King, Wauseon, Ohio (Central), and Natalie Rupp, Wauseon, Ohio (Tedrow), Feb. 10, by Randall K. Nafziger.

Miller-Mishler: LeEtta Miller, Shipshewana, Ind. (Plato), and Richard Mishler, LaGrange, Ind. (Plato), Feb. 17, by Richard Martin.

Morano-Siftar: Leo J. Morano, III, Towamencin Twp., Pa., and Kathryn Elizabeth Siftar, Perkasie, Pa. (Blooming Glen), Feb. 16, by Truman H. Brunk, Jr.

DEATHS

Fisher, Ben, 99, New Holland, Pa. Born: Sept. 27, 1896, East Earl Twp., Pa., to Christian S. and Leah Beiler Fisher. Died:

Feb. 5, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—children: Mary Nestlerode, Sarah Dake, Leah Zook, Lydia Martin, Emma Koerner, Ruth Schrock, Anna Swarr, Eva Hershey, Amos F., Chris S.; 50 grandchildren, 130 great-grandchildren, 5 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Annie E. Flaud Fisher (second wife) and Fannie Zook Fisher (first wife). Funeral: Feb. 8, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by Clair Umble and Richard Umble. Burial: Stoltzfus Cemetery.

Fisher, Lester H., 84. Born: Sept. 17, 1911, Salem, Tex., to Stephen S. and B. Lavina Hooley Fisher. Died: Jan. 27, 1996, Honey Brook, Pa. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Harry L., Ralph S., J. Kenneth, D. Edwin, Alvin B., Harold L., Vernon J., Verda E. Byler, Mabel G. Kennel, Ruth Hershey, F. Grace Ours. Predeceased by: Kathryn H. Weaver Fisher (wife). Funeral and burial: Jan. 31, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by Herman N. Glick, R. Clair Umble, and P. Melville Nafziger.

Gehman, Brian L., 33. Born: Feb. 26, 1962, Sellersville, Pa., to Robert H. and Edith Zehr Gehman. Died: Jan. 3, 1996, Easton, Md., of pneumonia. Survivors—brothers: Brent, Bradley, Brooke. Funeral and burial: Jan. 6, Tressler Mennonite Church, by Lowell Bechtel, Robert Zehr, and Vernon Zehr.

Hostetter, Harry J., 65, Atglen, Pa. Born: Oct. 7, 1930, Gap, Pa., to Jay and Margie Hershey Hostetter. Died: Feb. 16, 1996, Atglen, Pa. of cancer. Survivors—wife: Lois Landis Hostetter; children: Richard E., Kenneth E., J. Michael, Sandra J. Mowrer, Peggy L. Rutt; brother and sisters: Wilmer, Anna Kreider, Elva Martin, Vera Mast, Rosa Weidman; 16 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 20, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by Richard L. Buckwalter and Richard B. Buckwalter. Burial: Old Road Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Hutchison, Erle, 94, Goshen, Ind. Born: June 18, 1901, Clarence, Ill., to Louis and Mabel Currie Hutchison. Died: Jan. 15, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Catherine Martin Hutchison; daughters: Patricia Abild, Marilyn Thorderson; brother and sister: James, Jessie Perry; 3 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: College Mennonite Church. Funeral: Jan. 19, Greencroft Meetinghouse, by James Waltner and David Brunner. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

Knepp, John Roy, 89, Kalona, Iowa. Born: April 16, 1906, Johnson County, Iowa, to John J. and Mary Miller Knepp. Died: Feb. 16, 1996, Wellman, Iowa. Survivors—wife: Mary Rhodes Knepp; children: Clayton, Wallace, Cleo, John, Darlene; 17 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Edward (son). Funeral and burial: Feb. 19, East Union Mennonite Church, by Noah Helmuth and Michael Loss.

Kremer, Lorne W., 66, Hesston, Kan. Born: Feb. 18, 1929, Milford, Neb., to William H. and Malinda Miller Kremer. Died: Feb. 17, 1996, of pulmonary fibrosis. Survivors—wife: Hazel King Kremer; children: Richard, Russell, Rodney, Kathleen; sisters: Opal Miller, Margaret Roth, Ora Bender, 4 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 20, Whitestone Mennonite Church, by Ronald Guengerich and Louise Wideman. Burial: Eastlawn cemetery.

Lehman, Margaret Grace Roth, 77, Tofield, Alta. Born: March 28, 1918, Tofield, Alta., to Valentine and Lydia Stauffer Roth. Died: Feb. 7, 1996, Tofield, Alta., of cancer. Survivors—sons: Douglas, Lorne, Bob, Maurice; sisters: Martha Sitler, Florence King; 10 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Melvin Lehman (husband) and Murray (son). Funeral and burial: Feb. 12, Salem Mennonite Church, by Orvin Boettger, Ray Landis, and Dan Graber.

Newswanger, Willis R., 78, New Holland, Pa. Born: Jan. 21, 1917, Salisbury Twp., Pa., to Aaron W. and Lavina B. Gehman Newswanger. Died: Dec. 19, 1995, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—wife: Alice Keeport Newswanger; children: Carl K., Aaron K., Galen R., Ella; sisters: Mary Fritz, Anna Arment, Ella Hershey, Ruth Long; half brothers and sister: Landis and Mahlon Newswanger, Martha Beyers; 9 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Old Road Mennonite Church. Funeral: Dec. 27, Mennonite Home's Orrville Chapel, by Richard L. Buckwalter and Robert A. Martin. Burial: Millersville Mennonite Cemetery.

Rhodes, Sadie, 88, Ocala, Fla. Born: Oct. 14, 1907, Rockingham County, Va., to Emmer and Stella Heatwole Rhodes. Died: Jan. 14, 1996, Ocala, Fla. Survivors—son: Glenn; brother and sisters: Stanley Rhodes, Margaret Keller, Minnie Carr, Hazel Heatwole, Helen Shank, Marie Shank; 4 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Willie Rhodes (husband) and 4 sons. Funeral and burial: Jan. 17, Central Baptist Church, by Jesse and Andy Bloom.

Schweitzer, J. Alvin, 89, Kouts, Ind. Born: Sept. 8, 1906, Milford, Neb., to Christian and Mary Erb Schweitzer. Died: Feb. 15, 1996, Valparaiso, Ind. Survivors—wife: Mabel Reinhardt Schweitzer; stepchildren: Leila Hostetler, Madelyn Eichelberger, Roland Good; 10 stepgrandchildren, 22 step great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17, Kouts, Ind., by John F. Murray and LeRoy Kennel. Burial: Hopewell Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Nora E., 85. Born: Aug. 19, 1910, Elverson, Pa., to Jacob P. and Annie Reeser Stoltzfus. Died: Jan. 23, 1996, Honey Brook, Pa. Funeral and burial: Jan. 27, Kinzer Mennonite Church, by Herman N. Glick and Aquila E. Stoltzfus.

Wenger, Edna Rebecca, 90, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: July 24, 1906, Rockingham County, Va., to Daniel P. and Emma F. Heatwole Wenger. Died: Feb. 8, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivor—sister: Oma Bowman. Funeral: Feb. 10, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community auditorium, by Joe and Edith Shenk and Glendon Blosser. Burial: Weavers Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Yoder, John, 94, Wakarusa, Ind. Born: Sept. 5, 1901, St. Joseph County, Ind., to Jacob V. and Caroline Bleile Yoder. Died: Jan. 28, 1996, Elkhart, Ind., of a coronary occlusion. Survivors—children: Marlene Miller, Lorene Gross, Theda Mast, Royce, Kenneth; sister: Alma Stahly; 13 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Mabel Yoder (wife), and Wilda and Janice Yoder (infant daughters). Funeral: Feb. 2, North Main Street Mennonite Church, by Ken Bontreger and John King. Burial: Yellow Creek Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Yoder, Patricia Shellenberger, 67, Goshen, Ind. Born: Oct. 24, 1928, Goshen, Ind., to Edward G. and Mattie Miller Shellenberger. Died: Dec. 29, 1995, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Jay Harold Yoder; children: Beth Jensen, Barbara, Stephen; brother and sister: James Shellenberger, Beverly Miller; 5 grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3, College Mennonite Church, by James Waltner and Nancy Kauffmann. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

Sporting a new look. *Goshen, Ind. (GC)*—An updated college seal, new sports logo, and new wordmark are giving publications, advertisements, stationery, and sweatshirts at Goshen College a new look. The new images are the product of months of work by a campus committee and design team. The traditional lamp and book are still present in the seal but filled in with color rather than outlined, and the words "Goshen College" are larger. GC motto "Culture for Service" remains a central part of the seal. The sports logo features a stylized maple leaf and a new wordmark. Several programs that had individual logos will discontinue them, and a design manual provides written standards for use. "Strong graphic identity helps us in a visual age," says president Victor Stoltzfus.

Evangelicals urge Congress to uphold Endangered Species Act

The leading gathering of ecologically concerned evangelical leaders has called on Congress to uphold and strengthen the Endangered Species Act.

The resolution, adopted by the Christian Environmental Council at their annual meeting, urges Congress to resist any "action that would weaken, hamper, reduce, or end the protection, recovery, and preservation of God's creatures, including their habitats."

"Congress is threatening to undo legislation that has proven to be effective, efficient, and just," says Evangelical Environmental Network president Stan LeQuire, adding that the act has slowed the rate of species extinction in the United States.—*Evangelical Environmental Network*

Church of England rejects notion of hell as "fire and brimstone"

The Church of England has joined other church groups—including its American counterpart, the Episcopal Church—in rejecting the traditional "fire and brimstone" idea of hell, calling it a distortion of "the revelation of God's love in Christ." The church commission has replaced the idea of eternal punishment with the concept of "total non-being" for those who reject God's love. The commission writes that the implication of the classic depiction of hell makes God into a "sadistic monster . . . who consigned millions to eternal torment."

Dennis L. Okholm, associate professor of theology at Wheaton (Ill.) College, says that "pluralism is an issue that's making everyone rethink the Christian concept of salvation [only] through Jesus Christ. The world is smaller, and we know more about other religions."—*Chicago Tribune*

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund ends 10,000 letter drive

People across the United States sent 10,000 letters to members of Congress last year in support of the Peace Tax Fund Bill. The National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund launched the letter-writing program to boost the profile of the bill and to "raise the nation's conscience around issues of military spending."

The Peace Tax Fund bill changes the internal revenue code so that a taxpayer, conscientiously opposed to participation in the military, can pay taxes in full and have the part equal to the current military portion of the federal budget paid into a fund for nonmilitary purposes. Currently, nearly one-third of every federal income tax dollar is spent for military purposes.—*National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund*

Monks design computer pages for the World Wide Web

"We've been making pages for 1,500 years," reads an advertisement for a new ministry of The Monastery of Christ in the Desert, an order of Benedictine monks in New Mexico. Although they have no phone or electrical service, the monks earn money by designing computer pages.

About eight monks, clad in hoods and blue jeans, work in the scriptorium, powered by solar energy and connected to the Web by cellular phone. They established a page on the Web a few years ago, announcing they would design pages for customers. They receive about ten prayer requests a day at their own home page, and a few people have expressed interest in joining the monastery. "This really fits our tradition," says Brother Mary-Aquinas. "Cybervocations, we call it."

—*National and International Report*

Revival fires and an Anabaptist pilgrimage

(continued from page 4)

English-speaking voices. Another American tour group, I snarled inwardly. But there was something distinctive about one particular voice that suddenly caught my attention. In an instant it became clear to me. The booming voice belonged to none other than revivalist George R. Brunk II, my erstwhile friend and tormentor of a decade or so earlier. With him was a Mennonite tour group *freundschaft*—my father's second cousins from West Liberty, Ohio; a close friend of my uncles' from Archbold, Ohio; and a bunch of Lederachs and Yoders I didn't know at all, but it didn't matter! There they were—salt-of-the-earth retirees, farmers, carpenters, millworkers. Not a Greek philosopher in the group. But they were my people. They fed me, welcomed me for a night, took up a small collection on my behalf, and sent me on my way.

I left Zurich a changed person. I had not found my people; rather, my people had found me. I had been embraced in my hour of need by a community of God's people. And in that moment, I knew I had been touched by the grace of God.

John D. Roth grew up in Holmes County, Ohio. Currently he is associate professor of history at Goshen (Ind.) College where, in addition to teaching, he serves as director of the Mennonite Historical Library and editor of The Mennonite Quarterly Review. *He and his wife, Ruth, are parents of four daughters and are active in the Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship. This article is reprinted by permission of Herald Press from the 1996 book,* Godward: Personal Stories of Grace, *edited by Ted Koontz.* *All rights reserved.*

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THE LAST WORD

It doesn't have to be a long hot summer

With the first coltsfoot coming through the ground here in Western Pennsylvania, I know spring is once again upon us. That means, in Mennonite ecclesiological circles, that people are getting ready for the annual gatherings of many of our area conferences.

As I listen to the talk this year, I detect apprehension, even fear. For at least two conferences, this is the year of *the decision:* what to do about congregations that have declared themselves to believe and practice differently from the majority of other congregations in the conference—and the denomination.

The issue, of course, is homosexuality. Some congregations have gone on record that they will accept practicing gay and lesbian members. They have looked at Jesus' actions of love and compassion in the Bible and believe they have no other choice.

Their position has brought storms of protest. It runs counter to the Bible's prohibitions on homosexuality as interpreted in the Mennonite Church's statement on human sexuality adopted at Purdue '87. So, other churches have concluded, these "supporting congregations" must either change their practices or be ousted. If nothing is done, some churches say, we'll leave.

Between these poles are the host of the rest of us—not quite sure what we should believe on this issue but sure of one thing: we want to be faithful to the Bible in the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. We wonder, however, if exclusion or expulsion is in the spirit of Jesus—even on this point, at least at this time.

So we are the ones who must stand up, raise our hands, and when recognized say: "Wait!"

Why should we wait?

There is too much confusion and uncertainty among us. Even if we agree on what the Bible says—and many of us don't—we're surely not of one mind on how it should be applied. While some of us emphasize the biblical statements against homosexual practice, others of us focus on Jesus' words and actions of compassion. To date we haven't agreed on how to bring the two together.

We are also aware the church has changed its interpretations of the Bible and its positions before. There was the matter of what kind of meat a Christian could eat (Acts 10) and circumcision (Acts 15). Later the subjects were slavery and the Sunday school (the 19th century), divorce and remarriage and women in leadership (the 20th). These too brought stormy periods for the people of God. Hindsight tells us that when we rushed into decisions the result was more hurt than help.

We should also wait because we have not explored all the options. Some have suggested that "supporting congregations" be designated "churches of refuge" for homosexual persons among us. Others believe the day is here to take a firm stand. Or we could follow the example of the Virginia Conference, who recently took a stand against accepting military personnel as members but agreed to stay in fellowship with congregations that differed.

We have not explored these options because the rhetoric is too intense and the volume too high. Homosexuality has become a battleground for the Mennonite Church. We are too angry with each other, too strident in our opinions, too defensive of our positions. In my personal life, I have learned I regret decisions made out of anger, fear, or confusion. The same is true for the church.

We have lessons from our past. Historians tell us a 1944 gathering of our denomination was particularly acrimonious as delegates tried to decide what to do about a district conference whose leaders refused to follow the rest of the denomination in what they wore. Some delegates wanted to expel, others didn't.

The gathering was at an impasse until one brother suggested they pray. Mennonite General Conference spent an hour and a half on its knees. Then with tears and words of confession, the conference agreed to disagree.

In the Mennonite Church today, I have seen more anger than tears when we talk about homosexuality. That in itself should tell us we are not yet ready to vote.

When that vote comes, there will be tears. If we are truly God's people, struggling as humans to be faithful disciples, listening together to the nudgings of the Spirit, any decision that goes against the strongly held beliefs of some of us, regardless of which way it goes, can only be made with brokenness and tears.

We are not nearly there yet. So we must ask, "What's the hurry?" Insights and convictions about faithfulness on this issue are subject to God's timing, not ours. Right now, I believe, the Spirit would tell us, "Wait!"—*jlp*

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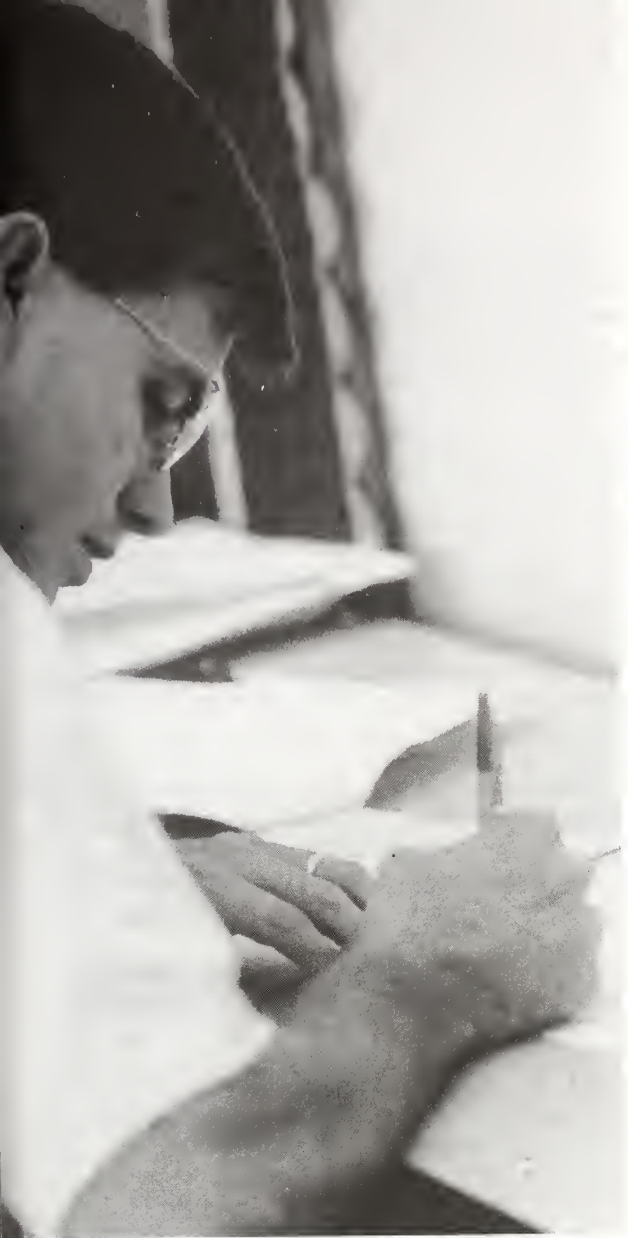
Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



Interpreting the Bible is a task for the individual believer and the scholar. But all interpretations must be tested over time in the life of the faith community—locally, denominationally, and in the broader church.

17 principles to help us interpret the Bible

We may think we can avoid the difficulties of interpretation by relying on the 'plain' meaning of the Bible. But even that sentence requires interpretation.

by Ryan Ahlgrim

When the Mennonite church struggles with a thorny theological or ethical issue, many people quickly quote a Bible verse and say, "That settles it!" I've done that myself. But the longer I'm a pastor, the less satisfied I am with this approach. Interpreting the Bible is simply not that easy. Like it or not, the task of biblical interpretation involves skills and spiritual sensitivities beyond the strength of Samson.

We sometimes think we can avoid the difficulties of interpretation by relying on the "plain" meaning of Bible verses. But even a simple sentence requires interpretation. For instance, the statement, "I never said she stole my wallet," has seven completely different "plain" meanings, depending on which of the seven words of the sentence is stressed. Hearers can interpret this statement correctly only if they know the intent of the speaker. In simple face-to-face communication this is usually not a problem, but the Bible is not simple face-to-face communication. At least four factors make interpreting the Bible especially difficult.

First, the Bible comes from a very different

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Harold N. Miller:
We can be a people of the Book and a community of the Spirit 6

Gardner Hanks:
Combining our meditation with our action 8

MBM explores possibility of Nazareth visitors center 9

Mennonite mother crusades against Taco Bell promotion 10

It is not enough for us to discover the biblical writer's meaning for the original audience. We must then make the bridge to our time and decide God's meaning for us.

time and culture. We do not share the same mind-set, assumptions, or experiences of the Bible's authors, so we can never fully understand an author's intent. No matter how much we learn from archaeology, anthropology, sociology, and history, we will never be able to put ourselves completely in the author's context and share the author's full meanings.

Second, the Bible is in a different language, and there is no such thing as an exact translation. All translations of the Bible are already interpretations by the translators because there are no exact word equivalents between English and the biblical languages. The fact that the Bible is written in ancient languages containing obscure words and phrases only makes the task more difficult.

Another complicating factor is the incredible diversity within the Bible: Old Testament, New Testament, law codes, narrative, poetry, proverbs, oracles, discourse, letters, visions, and more. These different types of communication are often offered from different viewpoints, with different information, and with different ideas. Pulling all of this diversity together to form a coherent message is a task that the church throughout history has never satisfactorily completed.

The biggest interpretive hurdle of all is that, unlike all other literature, we believe the Bible has a present meaning for us today. It is not enough for us to discover the author's meaning for the original audience. We must then make a bridge to our time and situation and decide the meaning God intends for us today. Building this bridge to the present is the central task of biblical interpretation. We need principles of interpretation to guide us in accomplishing this task. The better our principles, the more secure our bridge will be.

The following 17 principles of biblical interpretation grow out of years of study and influences from many directions. Within our own faith community, the book, *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women* by Willard Swartley (Herald Press, 1983), is particularly helpful. None of the 17 principles is entirely adequate—there are problems and unanswered questions in each. But I offer them for consideration and discernment.

1. The Bible is the human witness to God's fullest self-disclosure. The Bible is also the product of the Spirit's guidance of the faith community over several centuries of formation and canonization. It is therefore our foremost guide, source of nurture, and authority for faith and living. Its message is relevant today for all major aspects of life, including the social, political, and economic.

2. Individual verses, passages, and books are subject to the constraints of historical context, culture, and the personalities of the authors. But the overarching themes and principles that run throughout the Bible and the biblical story as a whole express God's authoritative Word for the faith community. Thus, when interpreting ethical instruction, the Bible's moral principles normally take priority over specific counsel if they appear to be in conflict.

3. Justice for the oppressed and love for all people are central moral principles of the Bible. These principles should function as interpretive starting points for the ethical content of the Bible.

4. The spirit and intent of a passage takes priority over its literal meaning. Legalism is contrary to biblical principles.

5. We need to identify our own biases, prejudices, and cultural influences and let the Bible critique us. Thus, if our reading of a passage is self-serving or leads to self-righteousness, we have misinterpreted it.

6. Reading the Bible wholistically means discerning the overall pattern and movement. We need to listen to the whole voice of Scripture on a particular topic and to relate particular verses and passages to the message of the entire Bible.

7. The Bible speaks with widely diverse voices, and we should not artificially harmonize this diversity. As Swartley has stated in *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women*, "Certain parts of the biblical witness critique other parts." For instance, Job critiques the Psalms, Ruth critiques Ezra, and James critiques a particular interpretation of Paul. We need to hear the truth on both sides and then relate them, for no single voice of Scripture sufficiently describes or speaks the whole truth.

8. God's ultimate self-disclosure in history is the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The rest of the Bible should be understood

in relation to Jesus. Thus, in general, the New Testament is ethically more relevant for the church than the Old Testament, and the example of Jesus expresses the basic intent of God more than other examples in either testament.

9. The Old Testament has its own integrity and should be read without importing artificial meanings derived from the New Testament. As Christians, we believe the New Testament carries forward the principle themes and dreams of the Old Testament, so there is a dynamic movement that sweeps from Genesis to Revelation; but the New Testament is not a correction of the Old Testament.

10. When seeking to interpret the present meaning of the Bible, it is usually best to begin by discerning its past meaning—specifically, a particular author's original intent. The historical-critical method is particularly helpful in recovering the most probable meanings of the original authors.

11. The meaning of a passage is not limited to its ideas but also includes the effects it produces in the reader's emotions and soul. Stories, in particular, involve our emotions and have meanings for our soul rather than our intellect. We must read a story or passage as a whole and pay attention to what the text is doing to the reader each step of the way.

12. We need to discern the original purpose and function of biblical stories so as to avoid misusing them. Not all biblical stories were meant as moral examples.

13. The present meaning we get from prophetic books is not predicting events but rather confronting the present culture with God's will and hope. Once the historical and cultural context of a book is fully understood, the interpreter should discern dynamic parallels between the prophet's situation and our own. It is usually not wise or helpful to attempt to find present-day fulfillment of supposed biblical prophecies—as though ancient prophets were specifically addressing the late 20th century.

14. Many parts of the Bible (especially narratives) have metaphorical or symbolic meanings as well as literal meanings, and we need to explore the deep truths embedded in metaphorical meanings. However, possible metaphorical meanings should not contradict the author's intent.

15. The present meaning of individual passages always goes beyond the meaning intended by the original authors. The books of the Bible are not simply historical documents that we excavate for ancient meanings, but they are sacred books conveying the continuously speaking Word of God. In addition, every generation of the faith community brings new experiences, circumstances, and learnings to the Bible, resulting in new readings, meanings, and applications. The history of the church amply demonstrates that there is no single or final meaning in any biblical passage; rather, meaning is continuous and plural. The church should continue exploring the plurality of meanings and testing them to discern the most helpful meanings for today. The Bible does not change, but the Word of God continues to speak.

16. Reason, experience, and the tradition of the faith community are also sources of authority and truth. These sources should be placed in dialogue with the Bible. The Bible can critique these sources, and these sources can illuminate and clarify God's Word in the Bible.

17. Interpreting the Bible is an individual task, a scholarly task, and a community task. The Bible should be in the hands of all believers, to be interpreted individually. The Bible must also be studied by scholars to help bridge the gap between the past and the present. But all interpretations, individual and scholarly, are finally tested over time by the life of the faith community—locally, denominationally, and in the church universal. The faith community should also listen to the interpretations of those outside the church because the boundaries of God's kingdom are surprising and unknown.

Ryan Ahlgrim is pastor of First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, Ind., and is currently writing his doctoral thesis on "Visioning the Realm of God: a Preacher's Journey Toward Creating Parables in the Spirit of Jesus." He and his wife, Laurie, have two children.

"For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord."—Eph. 5:8-10

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

How Can We Keep from Singing? (Jan. 16). Singing is a way of expressing oneself, praising the Lord, and receiving the Spirit. It is not the ultimate worship experience, but it is a very important part of the whole.

I also need to be continually challenged to read and study the Word, to listen to and apply the challenges of regular sermons, and to seek God through prayer.

Don Oswald, Jr.
Tremont, Ill.

I agree with Alan Kauffman in ***My Congregation Helped Me Decide God Was Talking to Me*** (Jan. 23) that the Mennonite Church must realize pastors don't "grow on trees." Neither are they magically produced with smoke and mirrors by our colleges and seminaries.

New pastors sit among us on Sunday mornings. If the church doesn't "tap them on the shoulder," as Kauffman terms it, who will? If we are to decrease the pastoral leadership deficit in the Mennonite Church, congregations must be serious about their responsibility to discern and empower ministerial gifts.

My trek to the pastorate is similar to Kauffman's: church discernment, use of gifts, affirmation, and support and encouragement to enroll in Hesston (Kan.) College's ministries program. I too am the product of a supportive congregation: Locust Grove Mennonite Church in Burr Oak, Mich. The mentoring and advocacy I received from this congregation and its leaders was invaluable to our family as I considered the call to ministry.

I am struck by the similarities between Kauffman's and my experiences and the methods the New Testament church used as it called its first leaders. That model still has application today.

Ruben Chupp
Wayland, Iowa

Virginia Takes Stand on Membership for Military Personnel but Allows Full Membership for Churches That Disagree (Jan. 30). If Virginia Conference believes that this nondecision ends the issue, it is mistaken. This is but the latest and most grievous wound inflicted on the denomination in the name of diversity. I fear it may be the one that ultimately proves fatal.

By failing to stand for principle in the face of politics and the influence of social forces—which they should have acknowledged and rejected—conference leaders have placed themselves squarely between those who believe that the church ought to be in the world, but not of it, and those who believe that the principles upon which the church rests merely represent a reflection of contemporary society.

We have become accustomed to having purely secular concepts such as "diversity" and "tolerance" thrown about in our discussion of important issues. Then these concepts are justified with a combination of contemporary psychobabble and half-baked theology.

Discipline has gone the way of black automobile bumpers and plain coats because denominational officers and representatives, having been shaped by secular society's adherence to the cult of the individual, are unable to understand or accept the biblical role or practical wisdom of discipline in the life of a communitarian church.

This is the ultimate victory of "I'm okay, you're okay" school of theology and church governance, in which getting along is more important than all else, including biblically based truth and time-tested traditions and practices.

Someone put it this way at the 1995 Virginia Conference assembly: "Those who stand in the way of change become mere curators of historical curiosities." All change, according to this theory, is for the best, and adherence to traditions that have stood up over centuries and for which our spiritual ancestors willingly gave all, including life itself, is un-Christian obstructionism.

As heirs to the Anabaptist tradition, we are constantly called to be as Christ. He did not pussyfoot around when confronted with wrongdoing. He called it what it was and abjured those who persisted in engaging in it to either change their ways or stand aside and, ultimately, suffer the consequences of their behavior.

As a denomination, we clearly no longer have the will or courage to follow Christ's example. We are far more willing to go along in order to get along, sell our spiritual inheritance for the false coin of personal acceptance, and turn our backs on the sacrifices

and examples of those who went before. Virginia Conference did not deal with a thorny issue at all, they merely finessed it. By not having the courage to take a stand one way or the other, they have undermined one of the most distinctive elements of what was once a distinctive denomination. I hope that they sleep better than I do.

Walt Smith
Raleigh, N. C.

How sad that you placed photos of Promise Keepers with your article about the secular men's movement—***What Is This Men's Movement All About?*** (Feb. 6). I hope some persons from your editorial and consulting staff will attend a 1996 Promise Keepers conference and report on God's moving among Christian men. I thank God for the many blessing poured on so many lives through this ministry to men and their families.

Karen Horning
Morgantown, Pa.

Facing Tough Questions About the Beginning of Life (Feb. 13). Thanks to Roman Miller for having the courage to examine these issues without resorting to any of the slogans so often spouted by both sides in the abortion debate. If there was ever a need for a "third way," this is it. May I suggest one possibility?

Can we take a step back and see the root problem not as abortion but as unwanted pregnancy? Even the most convinced pro-choice people of my acquaintance do not treat the decision of whether or not to have an abortion as a casual one but rather as the apparent least-horrible answer to a dilemma. Finding ways to help women avoid that dilemma—to not become pregnant if they don't want to—is more proactive, more effective, and, I would say, more in the spirit of Christ than cursing or cajoling those same women outside a clinic—a tactic more suited to showing the supposed "righteousness" of the demonstrator than to solving a problem.

Wayne Steffen
Goshen, Ind.

In his letter ("Reader Say," Feb. 20), Brad Clinehens expresses legitimate concern over our failure to be inclusive when we talk about "the Mennonite colleges of North America." He mentions that we overlook Bluffton and Bethel and mention only EMU, Goshen, and Hesston.

But there are more. Aren't Columbia, CMBC, Fresno Pacific, Concord, Conrad Grebel, and Tabor also Mennonite and also colleges and also in North America?

Even Clinehens' extended list mentions less than half the actual Mennonite colleges on this continent. And I'm afraid my list may overlook some. It's difficult to be inclusive, isn't it?

Victor R. Koop
Goshen, Ind.

I note with gratefulness your "Mennoscope" item (Feb. 20) about MCC purchasing food for North Koreans. The situation is indeed dire. I think, though, that 130,000 North Koreans may be "on the brink of" starvation, not salvation as your note indicates!

J. Ron Byler
Philadelphia, Pa.

Unfortunately, you're right. But wouldn't it be great if our error were correct?
—Editor

In relation to Gerald Schlabach's response ("Readers Say," Feb. 13) to J. Denny Weaver's article, ***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** (Jan. 23), we must look at two Scriptures about the Trinity:

Rom. 1:4—"Designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit by his resurrection from the dead." No notion of the Trinity here.

Mark 10:18—"Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." The plain reading of Scripture tells a story of a "man" chosen by God to be his Son.

Weaver's narrative theology makes this biblical story primary. While we may need systematic theology in the way that Schlabach believes, such a theology (and its trinitarian creation) must always be of secondary importance to the biblical story.

Mitchell Brown
Wilmette, Ill.

As a pastor, I wish to raise a stewardship concern. This has to do with the "overkill" in mailings, advertising, and promotional materials that I receive from church agencies.

We pastors receive a monthly Memo to Pastors with a wide variety of information in it. But then throughout the month, we get more mailings, some of which contain the same things that came with the Memo. Much of this simply must be thrown away in order for one to maintain sanity and order in the office.

With budgets shrinking, the temptation for church agencies must be to stay visible and even "compete" for contributions. The problem is that dollars that should be going to ministry and outreach are being used for these duplicate mailings.

Can our agencies and institutions "rediscipline" themselves to use the Memo to Pastors as their primary means of communication with pastors and congregations? This is one pastor who would respect such an action and give a fair review to the materials in the Memo.

Jonathan Smith
Calico Rock, Ark.

Gospel Herald *welcomes your letters about our content or about issues currently facing the Mennonite Church. Please keep them short and about one idea only. Send letters to "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHerald%mph2mcimail.com*

Pontius' Puddle

We can be both a people of the Book

We can have confidence in the Scripture as we observe that it anticipates and initiates changes in the people of God as they respond to the gospel of Christ.

by Harold N. Miller

We Mennonites are a "people of the Book." Every position our church has taken on matters of faith and life we have taken because of the teachings of the Bible.

We are also a community of the Spirit. As we gather, the Spirit builds within us a common witness regarding God's will. We place much trust in this discernment of the Spirit's voice. Indeed, it gave us the Bible. Prophets and apostles, hearing the Spirit, chose certain words. And councils of the church, hearing the Spirit, chose certain books as a canon or standard against which all other books are measured.

Though we open ourselves to both Scripture and Spirit for direction as we live as the people of God, we tend to give one or the other priority. In conversations on faith and life—including the most public, "Readers Say" letters in this publication—some of us are concerned about what the Bible says on an issue and want to start there. Others are more likely to emphasize a need to be attentive to the Spirit, pointing out that it was Peter's witness of the Spirit's actions in the lives of Gentiles that was the turning point for the Jerusalem council as recorded in Acts 15.

At times we do manage to elevate both Scripture and Spirit. We accomplish the difficult balancing act of having two sources of revelation occupy the center of our faith. We have confidence in each, drink fully of each, and both receive our attention and are given authority.

But this balancing is difficult to do. Particularly in relation to Scripture, we have many questions: did the Old Testament prophets, though often offering refreshing draughts of the Spirit, at times miss the mark? Was the apostle Paul occasionally prompted more by his rabbinical background than by the spirit of Jesus? But if the Scriptures are to guide our lives and give us direction, we must have confidence in them—confidence that they and the Spirit speak in harmony, that the Spirit will not lead today in some way that will invalidate any part of Scripture. The following observations help me to place trust in the Bible.

The Spirit has never led the church into some new understanding of life and faith without the Bible also leading in that understanding. When the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 chose to include uncircumcised Gentiles in the people of God, they were led by Scripture as well as the Spirit. At the conference James cited a prophecy of Amos that was one of many Old Testament passages containing seeds of the truth that God's purposes would one day encompass all peoples. Though many Hebrew Scriptures taught that uncircumcised persons could not be included in the people of God, the early church was still biblical when they affirmed the baptism of Cornelius because of the other group of passages James steered them to consider.

Our nonparticipation in war is also an example. There are passages in which God leads people into war and strengthens their hands for battle. But we still feel able to claim that we, a historic peace church, are a people of the Bible, for we see other passages that call the disciple of Jesus to a life of peace and to do good to all,

and a community of the Spirit

even the enemy (e.g. Matt. 5:43-45; Luke 6:27-36; Rom. 12:19-21; 1 Pet. 2:20-23; 3:8-9).

A further example is the issue of women in church leadership. Some passages forbid women to teach men. But many passages place women and men on even footing. Others also give examples of women freed for ministry (eg. Judges 4:4-16; 2 Kings 22:14-20; Acts 18:26; Rom. 16:1-3; Phil. 4:2-3). In Christ there is "neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female" (Gal. 3:28)—the first two realities certainly have social implications and so should the third. Men and women alike share the gift of the Holy Spirit and prophecy (Acts 2:17-18).

Our denominational leaders take a stance of freeing women for ministry, not because we ignore Scripture or creatively look between the lines as we read it, but because there are Scripture passages that explicitly lead us.

Each teaching of the Bible may have been the best way possible at the time it was written to strengthen the people of God. Time after time one sees glimmers of how an Old Testament teaching replaced by the gospel of Christ has been the best for the people in the situation it was written. As such, it is not in error any more than we would say that the incomplete bud of a flower is in error, or that butterflies make the caterpillar and cocoon into errors.

Some assume that when a biblical passage does not give the most helpful instructions for us today, it was not inspired by the Spirit of God. But we need not consider as "mistakes" the Bible passages Christ downplayed when he taught "love your enemies and do good to them that hate you" or by the early church when they accepted Gentiles without circumcision. Instead of being instructions that were not God-breathed, those teachings may have been part of the necessary progression of redemptive history. They were replaced not because they were errors but because they were "fulfilled."

The Levitical laws that Moses delivered are a major example of teachings that seem life-denying and contrary to the spirit of Jesus. They yielded a life lived according to an external law and in slavish fear. But this need not mean that Moses mixed his own muddled ideas with the ideas of God.

When parents decide to give an adolescent more freedom, it does not mean they were wrong not to give that same freedom when the child was younger. Circumcision and the various codes of uncleanness built an identity that helped keep the people of Israel separate from their pagan neighbors.

The accounts of God leading the people into war are a second class of biblical passages that are contrary to the spirit of Jesus. But God may nonetheless have done so. Did God's purposes on earth (for instance, the birth of Christ and the church) require the preservation of Israel as a nation? If so, any enemy of Israel was God's enemy, and Israel's wars could be "holy" wars.

As long as the people of God were a nation, God may have been limited to only giving hints that warfare was far below the ultimate intention, such as forbidding David to build the temple because he was a man of war and had shed blood (1 Chron. 28:3).

The passages that call the husband the "head" and ask the wife to submit (like Eph. 5:22-24) are another example of teachings seen as below what God intends for humanity. A gathering consensus in the church today says that God's intention for the female-male relationship in a marriage is one in which decisions are made mutually and responsibilities are assigned according to ability, not gender.

But the apostle Paul may have been inspired

(continued on page 15)

Lectio Divina:

Combining our meditation with our action

An ancient method of reading and studying the Scriptures can help us not only to sense the voice of God but also to find strength to put what we hear into action.

by Gardner Hanks

Spiritual exercises can too easily remain separated from our daily actions. An ancient Christian way of reading the Bible, *lectio divina,* (Latin for "divine reading"), assumes that the spiritual life *will* have an impact on the practical business of living. This method of spiritual guidance involves reading a short Bible passage several times, each time trying to hear a different message.

Lectio can be used either by an individual or a group, but is generally most useful in a group setting. In *Bible Reading for Spiritual Growth* (Harper, 1993), Norvene Vest suggests the following group procedure:

Group members sit quietly for a few minutes to clear their minds of distractions. After the group is quieted, a meeting leader reads a short passage of Scripture twice: the first time slowly, the second time a bit faster. Participants ***listen for a word or short phrase*** from the passage that God brings to their attention. When the reading is over, each person sits quietly and thinks about the word or phrase that was brought to them. After a minute or two, the members share their word or phrase with the group without any other comment.

The passage is then read again. This time each person **listens for an image** that God reveals to them through the passage. The image is usually visual, but it may be auditory or tactile, and it may or may not be directly related to the passage. When the reading is over, the group members again meditate on the image for several minutes. Then they briefly describe the image they received to the group. Typically, these descriptions begin with "I saw . . ." or "I sensed. . . ."

As the passage is read for a third time, each person **listens for a specific call from God** that they are to carry out in the next few days. Group members meditate for a few minutes and then briefly share their individual calls.

Finally, each person in turn prays for the individual to his or her right. The prayer frequently is based on the call that the individual shared with the group; it may be made either out loud or silently.

Our small group has practiced *lectio divina* as the heart of our time together for almost two years. We normally share more generally before and after the time we spend in *lectio.* The method has a distinctive rhythm of silence and speaking, thus giving a sense of both the individual and the communal aspects of spirituality.

A vital part of the spiritual exercise is examining how we can apply our spiritual insights to our daily lives. The calls from God that members of our group receive are often fairly general, such as to be more aware of Jesus' love for us or to take more time for prayer. But members have also felt called to contact specific individuals or to carry out specific actions. One member was called to contact a church member who had not been in church for a few weeks.

One evening I felt called to convene a community meeting for people opposed to the death penalty. The passage that night was Psalm 84:1-4 (NIV), a psalm of praise for God's temple. The phrase that I heard most clearly was "cries out." The image I received was based on a scene in the movie version of *The Christmas Carol* in which Scrooge feels abandoned by the ghost of Christmas Present and cries out, "What have I done to be abandoned so?"

During this period of silence, I began thinking of the people who have been abandoned by society. Death row inmates came to my mind because I had worked for the abolition of the death penalty for a number of years. I had not been very active for several months, however, and that evening I sensed that God was calling me to give people who oppose the death penalty a chance to get together.

Lectio divina is not a panacea for overcoming the difficulties in understanding the Scriptures, and it may not be for everyone. But taking a few minutes to listen to what God has to say directly to me in this way can give me a calm island in an often frantic life. It is an island that prepares me to reenter the waters of life with a renewed sense of purpose and direction.

Gardner Hanks is the Idaho death penalty project coordinator for Amnesty International. He is a librarian and a member of Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship in Boise, Idaho. Hanks and his wife have two daughters.

Mennonite Board of Missions' partnership explores establishing visitors center in Jesus' hometown

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—An interactive visitors center based on Jesus' life and teaching could become a reality in his hometown of Nazareth, Israel, in partnership with the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

MBM would join with a Scottish mission group and Christians in Nazareth to share the life and message of Jesus in a contemporary format.

The MBM board of directors, meeting here Feb. 23, unanimously appointed D. Michael Hostetler—a veteran videographer from Scottdale, Pa., and executive producer of the feature film, *The Radicals*—to direct a feasibility study for the creation of a Nazareth visitors center.

Half of the 2.5 million pilgrims who come annually to Israel visit Nazareth. Few stay more than two hours because of a lack of sites to visit, says Hostetler.

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This proposed visitors center, however, could "illuminate the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth to pilgrims . . . of all faith backgrounds," says Hostetler.

The Nazareth visitors center could open as early as November 1999—in time for celebrations of the 2,000th anniversary of Jesus' birth—on 12 acres next to Nazareth Hospital, which owns the land with MBM partner Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society.

D. Michael Hostetler, shown in front of the Nazareth Hospital, is developing plans for an interactive visitors center based on the life of Jesus. The site would consist of a visitors center using "multimedia experiences" to show the geography and history of Jesus' life, and a "living museum" resembling a Galilean village of 2,000 years ago, according to Hostetler.

The site would consist of two areas: a visitors center using multimedia "experiences" in Arabic, English, and Hebrew to show the geography and history of Jesus' life, and a "living museum" resembling a Galilean village of 2,000 years ago.

As the largest Arab city in Israel, Nazareth offers tourists little in the way of Christian presence. "There are few sites—either ancient or replicas—that take visitors back to Jesus' time and society," Hostetler says.

"People come to the Holy Land looking for Jesus and often go away feeling like they haven't really found Jesus," says Virginia A. Hostetler, who will work with her husband and serve as communications director at Nazareth Hospital. "We have an opportunity to minister to that hunger."

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The idea first was proposed by Nakhle Bishara, an Arab Christian who serves as medical director of Nazareth Hospital. Bishara's idea was "to present the old message of the good news of Jesus in a new mode," according to Hostetler.

Bishara mentioned this vision to Robert and Nancy Martin, MBM workers at the hospital, who helped foster the three-way partnership of the center.

"It's identity will be very much associated with the hospital, which has been known since 1861 as having a healing ministry to the Muslim population and now the Jewish community," Robert Martin says.

Several board members said they wanted to know the missiological implications of using tourism as a means for telling others about Jesus.

"You're walking into a political and theological minefield in doing this," said Sally Schreiner of the MBM board.

The visitors center "takes seriously the Jewish and Islamic faiths to provide a nonthreatening place for dialogue about Jesus of Nazareth," says Dale Schumm, MBM director for Asia and the Middle East. The project's directors would bring together archaeologists, theologians, historians, anthropologists, and others "to try to identify an interpretation of Jesus that is not culturally bound," says Stanley Green, MBM president.—*Tom Price*

Weaver named interim president at Goshen College

Goshen, Ind. (GC)—Henry D. Weaver of Santa Barbara, Calif., has agreed to serve as interim president of Goshen College (GC) for six months to one year beginning July 1, 1996. Victor Stoltzfus completes his 12-year tenure as president on June 30.

Henry D. Weaver has been named interim president of Goshen (Ind.) College.

Weaver previously served GC for 22 years, joining the chemistry faculty in 1957. He was acting dean (1970-72), provost (1972-79) and acting president (winter 1976-77). From 1979 to 1991 he continued administrative work at the University of California system as deputy director for the Education Abroad Program of the University of California system, retiring in 1991.

"We look forward to the contribution that Weaver can make during this time of transition," said Myrl Nofziger, chair of the GC board. "He is familiar with Goshen College and its mission and knows many of the present administrators and faculty members. We believe that he can provide excellent leadership until a new president assumes responsibility."

Provost emeritus. The Mennonite Board of Education (MBE) made the appointment on the recommendation of the GC board and an interim arrangements committee.

Weaver was a leader in developing GC's international education program in the late 1960s. Since going to California, Weaver has investigated or negotiated educational programs in more than 50 countries. GC named him professor emeritus and provost emeritus in 1991. A native of Harrisonburg, Va., Weaver served as an administrator for the Mennonite Board of Missions in the mid-1950s.

MBE president Orville Yoder notes that the presidential search committee continues to look for a long-term president. —*Don Garber*

Weeping over Jerusalem:
Peacemakers in Hebron respond to bombings

Hebron, West Bank—The Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) in Hebron rode the Kiryat Yovel-Goren bus #18 in Jerusalem on March 10 in response to recent bombings of the bus line. The ride was uneventful, reports CPT, remarkable only in the increased presence of military personnel at bus stops.

Over 60 people have been killed since Feb. 25 as a result of four suicide bombings, according to an article in *The New York Times*. The recent violence threatens to derail the peace accord between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Palestinians express dismay. CPT's public resolution to ride bus #18 was designed "to call attention to the futility of using violence to address the conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians," according to a CPT release. Before the action, CPT sent a notice of intent to Israeli police, Palestinian and Israeli political movements, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and church and press outlets.

Members of the team rode the buses for 2 1/2 hours, beginning at 6 a.m. on March 10. The night before they participated in a peace rally in Jerusalem along with several thousand people.

The militant Islamic group Hamas is claiming responsibility for the bombings.

"Our Palestinian friends in Hebron have expressed sorrow and dismay to us regarding these bombings," the CPT team writes. "We ask our constituency not to condemn an entire nation for the actions of a few."

'Too much trauma.' "Three bus bombings in one week is too much trauma," wrote Calvin Shenk, professor of religion at Eastern Mennonite University currently living in Jerusalem, after the first week of bombings. "It's the senseless murder of innocent passengers. And it's in the name of religion—taking nearly 50 lives in the name of God."

Shenk says the bombings are designed to kill the peace process. "I'm still weeping inside," he writes. "But I am comforted in remembering that Jesus wept over Jerusalem. I pray for the 'peace of Jerusalem' with justice for all."—*taken from releases by CPT and EMU*

Sher Gunden King, shown here with her 6-year-old daughter Lauren, was disturbed by the promotion of "Street Shark" characters in Taco Bell Kids Meals. King has launched a petition and letter campaign to prevent such promotions.

Taking on the 'Street Sharks':
Violent Taco Bell toys prod concerned mother to action

Name: *"Jab."* ***Motto:*** *"Hit it head-on."* ***Street skills:*** *Hits hard. Hits often. Strikes his target with the power of a hydraulic jackhammer. Batters down barricades, overpowers obstacles. Nothing stops him.*

Goshen, Ind.—Sound appetizing? It's part of a side panel from a Taco Bell Kid's Meal bag which depicts "Street Sharks"—humanoid predators with huge mouths lined with sharp teeth, feet for stomping, and fists itching to fight.

When Sher Gunden King of Goshen, Ind., sat down to eat a take-out meal with her daughter Lauren on Dec. 11, she was nauseated by Taco Bell's glorification of violence. She called the consumer number for Taco Bell and was curtly told, "Mrs. King, your children are exposed to this all the time. This is nothing unusual."

Launching petitions and letters. King got the courage from that conversation to launch a letter-writing campaign and petition drive that she hopes will deliver 10,000 signatures to Taco Bell and its parent company, PepsiCo Inc. Numerous Mennonite and non-Mennonite organizations are supporting King's campaign, and both the mayor and police chief of Goshen have written letters expressing their concern.

King,.a member of College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., has spoken to top officials of Taco Bell and PepsiCo and explained her belief that children should not be the target of promotionals that endorse violence. "This overt marketing is undercutting me as I try to teach Joe [age 7] and Lauren [age 6] that hitting and biting are wrong. Moreover, it is reinforcing children whose homes are less sensitive to the ramifications of such a violent mindset."

Influencing future campaigns. Amy Sherwood, Taco Bell's director of public relations, quoted in an article in the *South Bend Tribune*, says that the restaurant chain believes its Street Sharks promotion was consistent with the company's goal of promoting products through wholesome entertainment. She said the Street Sharks cartoon usually involves a "moral and 'do-good' message."

The Street Sharks promotion ended in December, and King says she hopes the letters and petition will encourage Taco Bell to change the tone in future promotions directed toward children. She says that people interested in signing the petition or becoming involved can contact her at 219 533-8156 before April 10.—*Susan Mark Landis*

Orlando 97 planning committee begins brainstorming

Elkhart, Ind. (MCGB)—The first planning meeting for the 1997 Mennonite Church adult convention in Orlando, Fla., took place at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church on Feb. 9-10.

The convention planning committee adopted the following purpose statement for the Orlando 97 adult convention, to be held July 29-Aug. 2, 1997:

"At Orlando 97 God will greet us in holy moments, energize us through the gift of our diverse Mennonite community, transform us for a passionate mission, and launch us as agents of healing and hope."

The committee spent time discerning the theme, biblical texts, and selecting worship leaders and planners, musicians, preachers, and Bible study teachers.

Convention planning committee members include Owen Burkholder, Dwight McFadden, Jr., Miriam Book, Duane Beck, Phil Bergey, Joy Sutter, Ruth Weaver, Roy Williams, Raymond Martin, and Nancy Yoder.

'Weep for yourselves and your children.' *Port-au-Prince, Haiti (MCC)*—LeAnne Zook of Iowa City works with children at the Missionaries of Charity feeding hospital for malnourished children here. She serves with Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) SALT program (Serving and Learning Together).

"For the first time in my life I understand the meaning of Luke 23:28-31," Zook writes. " 'But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?' "

"I know that MCC and many other organizations are doing the best they can, when they can. I know we can't be everywhere; we must choose, weighing all sorts of factors. And I personally must consider where my knowledge can be most helpful. But these explanations leave a bitter, metallic taste in my mouth as I look upon a starving child and her crying mother. The child I hold was starved by poverty, ignorance, and hopelessness. Where were my wealth, my knowledge, and my God when her mother needed them?"

Amish people are planning to vote in Allen County, Ind., this November for the first time. As of early February, 98 Amish residents had registered to vote in the next election, and more were expected to register, according to a report in the Berne *Tri-Weekly News*. About 800 Amish people are eligible to vote in the county.

The Amish had historically not voted because of their desire to remain separate from the world and their conviction against passing judgment on people. "It's been a difficult decision for the Amish, but they realize that they judge people every day when they decide whose store to go to," says Robert Griggs, an Amish advocate in Allen County.

—Mennonite Weekly Review

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An oral history and literary project at Bethany Christian High School in Goshen, Ind., matches high school students and senior citizens at a local retirement community. Teachers Liz Hoover and Devon Schrock designed the project in which students interview older people to collect biographical vignettes of their lives. The students will use the interviews to create poetry, short stories, drawings, photography, cartoons, or editorials, to be compiled into a literary magazine.

"As the trend in education focuses on computers and other high-tech gadgets, I find myself putting more and more energy into having students do projects that build community," says Hoover.

—Bethany Christian High School

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Prompted by disgruntled callers, a Pittsburgh-area radio station interviewed Jerry Holsopple, producer of the Mennonite Churches' "Stop the Violence" radio spots on Feb. 20. Two callers to a talk radio show said on air that the spots were probably from a "left-wing church that had been bought off by the James and Sarah Brady gun control people," according to Holsopple, a producer for the media department of Mennonite Board of Missions.

Holsopple agreed to respond with an impromptu live phone interview. "I explained that the spots arise out of who we are as a historic peace church with roots in the 15th century and that we have no connections with the Bradys," says Holsopple.

WBCW-AM's general manager Verna Calisti said the station received a positive response from listeners after the interview. Referring to herself and the talk show host, she quipped, "You've got two converts [to the Mennonite Church] right here, I'll tell you."

—Mennonite Board of Missions

Former drug addict helps others 'get clean'

Chester, Pa. (EMM)—About eleven years ago, Jorge Granados was in Puerto Rico "getting clean" from a 16-year drug habit. "At one point I did about $1,000 work of drugs a day," says Granados, who was a dealer.

Now he helps others kick the habit at a drug rehabilitation center in Chester, Pa.

Granados says his life changed in 1985 when he committed himself to Christ. Divorced from his wife, Maria, and separated from his children, he entered a drug rehabilitation center in Puerto Rico, where he learned about the salvation of Christ.

"It was there that God spoke to me," Granados says. While he was in rehabilitation, he sensed that he would minister to drug addicts like himself. "I didn't know how or where or when, but I knew it would happen someday," he says.

Seven years later—after he had remarried Maria, started a business, and served as pastor in Puerto Rico—Granados spoke in several churches in the Philadelphia (Pa.) area. Here he met Leon and Rosie Schnupp, leaders of the Lighthouse Church in Chester, Pa. Leon was serving as pastor there and as bishop of Delaware Valley South, the youngest district in Lancaster (Pa.) Conference.

"When I arrived in Chester, I said to myself, 'This is it. This is where God wants me,' " Granados says.

Schnupp notes that the Lighthouse Church had been praying for several years for a drug rehabilitation center in their neighborhood, partly because Chester's crime rate is one of the highest in Pennsylvania. When Granados told them his vision, several churches in the area helped to get the ministry started.

After searching for the "right building" for the Peniel Recovery Center, Jorge and Maria found it at 215 Parker Street—a run-down building condemned by the state. They bought it from the state for $888.

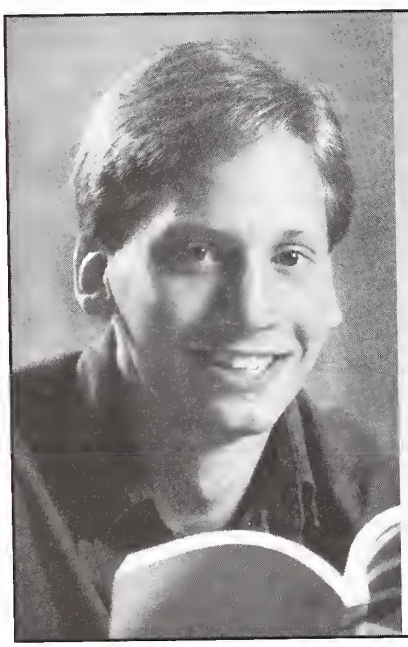
Volunteers from Lancaster Conference churches helped to reconstruct the building, install the required security systems, and donate furniture and supplies.

Jorge and Maria have served as director and assistant director for two years. People who enroll in the nine-month inpatient program come voluntarily or are sent there by a county court. The program can treat 26 men at one time, offering Bible studies, therapy sessions, job placement assistance, and job skill training.

Nelson Madera, currently enrolled in the program, says, "I tried to [get off drugs] on my own. But I realized that . . . I need God." He says he is learning to discipline himself at the center. "I am starting to know about God and the things that God likes and the things that God doesn't like."

—*Julie E. Hershey*

Maria and Jorge Granados (left and center), directors of Peniel Recovery Center, talk with Leon Schnupp, bishop of the Delaware Valley South district of Lancaster Mennonite Conference.



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EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

- **Woman still missing.** Alicia Showalter Reynolds, Baltimore, Md., the 25-year-old Mennonite doctoral student abducted on March 2, is still missing. Police have released a sketch of a man seen in a pick-up truck next to her car found near Culpeper, Va. Some 400 family and friends held a "Service of Hope" for Showalter Reynolds at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., on March 10.

- **Fourth printing ordered.** First released as a 112-page trade paperback in December, the new *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* will enter its fourth printing at Herald Press in Scottdale, Pa. Total copies in print will be 22,500. According to director Paul Schrock, "The *Confession of Faith* is currently in greater demand than any of our other Herald Press books." The confession was adopted in a joint convention of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church at Wichita '95 in July.

- **Leadership team planned.** The board of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., approved the creation of a position of vice-president of advancement and administration in light of the arrival of the new president, J. Nelson Kraybill. This will create a four-person leadership team: president, dean, vice-president of advancement and administration, and director of business and finance.

- **SEMILLA begins building.** SEMILLA, a Central American Anabaptist seminary in Guatemala City, has begun the first stage of building plans by authorizing staff to begin fundraising for the project. The board of directors estimate that the new building, containing offices and classrooms, will cost about $240,000. Last year the seminary opened a new study location among the K'ekchí people and plans to open a second location in Mexico City.
—*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

- **Colleges honored.** Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., Goshen (Ind.) College, Bluffton (Ohio) College, and Bethel (Kan.) College were all named to the "Templeton Honor Roll for Character Building Colleges." Created in 1989 by the Templeton Foundation to recognize institutions of higher learning that make character development an integral part of education, the honor roll features 124 U.S. colleges and universities.

- **Pueblo church offers help.** Pueblo (Colo.) Mennonite Church offers moving assistance to anyone considering moving to the Pueblo area. Contact Wayne Bowman at 719 564-0742 for more information.

- **New appointments:**

Wayne Gehman, assistant video producer of Mennonite Board of Missions Media Ministries, Harrisonburg, Va.

Larry Nikkel, executive director of Mennonite Health Services.

Christy Risser, editorial assistant in mission advocacy and communication division of Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind.

Theron F. Schlabach, acting director of the Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College for the 1996-97 school year.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Gary Blosser was ordained at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio, on Feb. 18, by Tom Kauffman.

Mark Roth was licensed as minister at Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church, Preston, Miss., on Feb. 18, by Glenn Myers.

- **Coming events:**

Opening of technology center of Erie Neighborhood House, Chicago, Ill., March 21. Mennonite Voluntary Service workers will be recognized for their service. More information available from Kent Unruh at 312 666-3430.

50th anniversary celebration of Mennonite and Goshen Biblical Seminaries, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., April 26-28. Activities include a 50-hour prayer vigil, worship services, storytelling, and banquet. More information and registration for banquet available from Andrew Kreider, 219 296-6268.

Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Camp Association dinner, Kulpsville Holiday Inn, May 2. Open to all interested in Christian camp and retreat ministries and Spruce Lake Retreat. Myron Augsburger is the keynote speaker. Call 717 595-7505 for reservations.

Serving up Dutch delights. *Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)*—Liesbet Geijlvoet from the Netherlands cooks a traditional meal for the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary community at the end of January. Geijlvoet is a Mennonite Central Committee trainee who spent six months in the Elkhart and Goshen area. Working with the AMBS Lambright Center cook, Geijlvoet adapted a recipe for "Leidse hutspot" with potatoes, carrots, and beef to feed the usual seminary crowd. Homemade "Apfeltart" (apple pie) completed the traditional Dutch meal.

While in Elkhart, Geijlvoet helped with AMBS faculty research, took a seminary class, volunteered in the seminary's cooperative childcare program, and interned with Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen.

- **New books:**

A Treasured Friendship by Carrie Bender is the fourth volume of the "Miriam's Journal" series of Amish fiction. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

Dead Letters by Susan Kimmel Wright, third in the "Dead-End Road Mysteries" series, was recently released by Herald Press. The 176-page mystery novel is for young readers. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

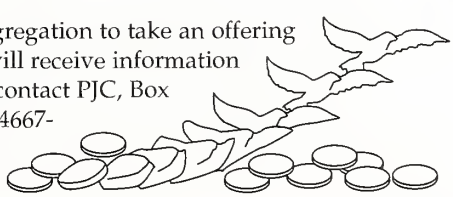
Introduction to Theology by J. C. Wenger is again in print. The book systematically sets forth biblical faith teachings and draws on theological writings of Anabaptists. Hardcover reprint available from Leland M. Haines at 810 348-2645.

Peace needs change!

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares. . ." —Micah 4:3

Our call from God is to change violence to peace. The Peace and Justice Committee of the Mennonite Church helps your congregation in this vital work, but we need your support.

We invite your congregation to take an offering for peace. Pastors will receive information in April MEMO or contact PJC, Box 173, Orrville, OH, 44667-0173; phone/fax 330-683-6844.



• **Job openings:**
Teaching positions, New Covenant Christian School, Lebanon, Pa. Openings in music (classroom and instrumental), part-time art, and part-time Bible instruction. Contact Vel Shearer at 717 274-2423.
YES Center director, Baltimore, Md. Youth Evangelism Service (YES) is a program of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Qualifications include experience in training young adults in discipleship, administrative abilities, cross-cultural experience, and a bachelor's degree. Position begins August 1996. More information available from EMM at 717 898-2251.

NEW MEMBERS

Bay Shore, Sarasota, Fla.: Norman and Lena Yutzy.
Kidron, Ohio: Bruce Detweiler Breckbill and Darrell Haven.
Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.: Jack Butt and Julia White.

BIRTHS

Bender, Judith King and Loren, New Holland, Pa., Christy Lynn (second child), Nov. 2.
Derstine, Rebecca Burkholder and Blaine, Washington, D.C., Caleb Christian (second child), Feb. 12.
Hershberger, Louise Smucker and Terry, Smithville, Ohio, Anna Louise (first child), Feb. 22.
Histand, Kim Ferebee and Ron, Charlottesville, Va., Kristin Elizabeth (first child), Feb. 23.
Madeira, Jan Frederick and Mark, Schwenksville, Pa., Ashley Nichole (third child), Feb. 18.
Martin, Sharon Detweiler and William, Harleysville, Pa., Anna Kathryn (third child), Feb. 25.
Oswald, Allison and Ron, San Diego, Calif., Garrett Austin (first child), Feb. 15.
Reesor, Nancy Burkholder and Paul W., Markham, Ont., Jacob Charles (first child), Feb. 21.
Stiglets, Imelda Cabacang and William, Gulfport, Miss., Tyler Lee (fourth child), Feb. 24.
Weston, Lucy Martino and Graeme, Richmond Hill, Ont., Daniel Robert Graeme (fourth child), Jan. 25.
Yoder, Deb and Verlyn, Kalona, Iowa, Laura Elaina (third child), Dec. 22.
Yutzy, Linda Bender and John, Iowa City, Iowa, Olivia Grace (second child), Feb. 23.
Zehr, Dianne Shenk and Kenton, Joppa, Md., Maya Gillian (third child), Feb. 18.

MARRIAGES

Schlabach-Wiseman: Brad Schlabach, Sarasota, Fla. (Bay Shore), and Amy Wiseman, Sarasota, Fla. (Bay Shore), Feb. 24, by Gene D. Miller.

DEATHS

Benner, Charles Henry, 73, Julesburg, Colo. Born: Oct. 27, 1922, Scribner, Neb., to Henry J. and Dora L. Ditson Benner. Died: Feb. 8, 1996, Grand Island, Neb., of a stroke. Survivors—wife: Florence Elaine Brandenburg Benner; children: Todd Ryan, John Reed, Scot Alan, Mary Beth Ingram, Gail Ann Elsasser; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17, Julesburg Mennonite Church, by Arthur J. Roth. Burial: Fort McPherson National Cemetery.

Crelli, William, 78, Johnstown, Pa. Born: Dec. 1, 1917, Windber, Pa., to Louis and Catherine Crelli. Died: Feb. 23, 1996, Johnstown, Pa. Survivors—wife: Louise Anderson Crelli; children: William, Linda; brother and sisters: Louis, Elva Dresner, Martha Henger. Congregational membership: Blough Mennonite Church. Funeral: Feb. 28, Forest Lawn Chapel, by Richard Mininger and David Mishler. Burial: Forest Lawn Cemetery.

Gingerich, Henry E., 75, Dundee, Ohio. Born: March 6, 1920, Holmes County, Ohio, to Emanuel and Lizzie Ann Troyer Gingerich. Died: Feb. 26, 1996, Dover, Ohio. Survivors—children: Mary Hershberger, Esta Mast, Joanna Rowe, Gladys Yoder; brothers and sisters: Atlee, Paul, Ida, Emma Yoder, Nora Miller, Nettie Hochstetler; 8 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Verna Yoder Gingerich (wife). Funeral: Feb. 29, Berlin Mennonite Church, by Ernest J. Hershberger and Leon Shrock. Burial: Berlin Twp. Cemetery.

Gingerich, Louisa Swartzendruber, 90, Iowa City, Iowa. Born: Aug. 31, 1905, Wellman, Iowa, to Christian and Magdalena Bender Swartzendruber. Died: Feb. 14, 1996, Iowa City, Iowa. Survivors—children: Minnie Knepp, Donald, Doris Nafziger, Mary Hickman, Mollie Miller; sister: Katie Brenneman Miller; 12 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Clark Gingerich (husband). Funeral and burial: Feb. 17, Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, by Wayne Bohn and Robert K. Yoder.

Good, Elizabeth Magdalene, 89, Elida, Ohio. Born: Oct. 29, 1906, Elida, Ohio, to Christian and Emma Jane Heatwole Good. Died: Feb. 9, 1996, Delphos, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—children: Dorthea Sauder, Lowell, Marvin, Bertha Bontrager, Helen Heatwole; brothers and sisters: Merlin, Ethel Snider, Mary Armstrong, Velma; 13 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Aaron S. Good (husband). Funeral and burial: Feb. 12, Salem Mennonite Church, by Mel Hathaway.

Grove, Thomas D., 84, Markham, Ont. Born: March 30, 1911, Markham, Ont., to Jacob L. and Frances Diller Grove. Died: Feb.13, 1996, Markham, Ont., of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Sarah Hoover Grove; children: Alvin, Margaret Stutzman, Elisabeth McKay, Erle; brother: Aaron; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19, Markham, Ont., by Lawrence Burkholder. Burial: Wideman Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Hinson, Edwin Ward, 60, Newport News, Va. Born: June 15, 1935, Peachland, N.C., to Lonnie J. and Mary Hamilton Hinson. Died: Jan. 18, 1996, Newport News, Va., of emphysema. Survivors—wife: Suzanne Sault Hinson; children: Eric B., David W., Karen Hinson Crumly; mother; brothers: J. Kirby, Robert N., David J., W. Michael; 3 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Jan. 21, Warwick River Mennonite Church, by Gordon Zook.

Hollinger, Melvin L., 74. Born: June 15, 1921, Lampeter, Pa. Died: Feb. 19, 1996, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—wife: Lois Witmer Hollinger; chil-

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dren: Barbara Kilgro, Dorothy Finch, Donald, Robert, Daniel, Richard; brothers and sisters: Lloyd, Clair, Elma Spangler, Mary Hostetter, Ruth, Kay; 14 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Feb. 22, New Providence Mennonite Church, by Paul Dagen and Bob Harnish.

Landis, Ruth R. Clemens, 93, Hatfield, Pa. Born: Oct. 20, 1902, Hatfield, Pa., to Jacob and Hanna Rittenhouse Clemens. Died: Feb. 12, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—children: Rhoda Bishop, Gladys Kulp, Jacob C., Ruth Longacre; 15 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Abram A. Landis (husband). Funeral: Feb. 17, Souderton Mennonite Homes, by John L. Ruth, James C. Longacre, Merlin S. Hendrick, and Douglas Jantz. Burial: Salford Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Lehman, Titus Irvin, 84, Lancaster, Pa. Born: Nov. 30, 1911, Manheim Twp., Pa., to Levi E. and Catherine Brubaker Lehman. Died: Feb. 3, 1996, Lititz, Pa., of a heart attack. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Richard N., Esther L. Myer, Grace D. Congregational membership: East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church. Funeral: Feb. 7, Landis Homes Chapel, by Melvin H. Thomas and Donald Good. Burial: Mellinger Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Pletcher, Ida Stahly, 99, Goshen, Ind. Born: April 20, 1896, Nappanee, Ind., to Daniel and Sarah Smucker Stahly. Died: Feb. 29, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—children: Arlene Hartman, Shirley Martin, Virgil, Paul; sister: Dorothy Hoffer; 11 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: S. Miles Pletcher (husband). Funeral: March 3, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, by Wes Bontreger. Burial: Yellow Creek Mennonite Church North Cemetery.

Snowy pals. *Goshen, Ind. (GC)*—Abbie Landis (left) of Lancaster, Pa., and Rachel Hershberger, Goshen, made the most of the snowy weather in January by sculpting two snowpeople on a bench beside the Adelphian fountain on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus. Named "al and betty," the snowpeople amused passersby for several weeks until a thaw melted them out of existence and into campus lore.

We can be both a people of the Book and a community of the Spirit

(continued from page 7)

by the Spirit of God when he did not straightaway advocate for marriages of equality but instructed husbands to sacrifice themselves for their wives and to care for them "as their own bodies."

Why? This instruction moves marriage toward mutuality. Christ as head builds up the church that it might reign with him; a husband sacrificing himself for his wife will yield a similar result. Further, this instruction is a wise route toward mutuality when a husband and wife have few relational skills. When a couple tries to live as equals without first having the character and relational skills needed to give someone else equal say and value, often their marriage tears apart with profound scars that generations will bear. The pattern of the wife submitting and the husband as head serving her can be what Christ uses to develop the character and experience needed for a relationship of complete mutuality to be secure and long-lasting.

We have confidence in Scripture as we observe that it anticipated and even helped initiate the changes that the people of God have made in response to the gospel of Christ. And we trust the Bible as we see glimmers of how its teachings—even those with no gospel character—may have strengthened the community to whom they were given.

Believing that the Spirit has inspired all the teachings of Scripture leads us to care intensely whether our assessment of what the Spirit is saying to us today is in line with the written Word. Trust that the whole Bible leads humanity in the way of health and shalom—as fast and wisely as possible—nudges us toward opening ourselves fully to receive from its pages.

It is good for us not to move on a matter facing the church unless our witness of the Spirit and our careful understanding of the thrust of Scripture both agree. Then the two occupy the center of our faith, and we can continue to be both a people of the Book and a community of the Spirit.

Harold N. Miller is pastor of Community Mennonite Fellowship, Corning, N.Y., and a relief rural mail carrier. He is the husband of Karen and father of four children.

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THE LAST WORD

Who then can understand?

In devoting an entire issue to the subject of biblical interpretation, we run the risk of making things too complex. Read a list of the difficulties of interpreting the Bible, such as Ryan Ahlgrim details on page 1, and one can become discouraged, even angry.

"Why make the Bible so difficult?" It's a question I hear more often than those who make their living trying to understand the biblical text might like to think. "Can't we just read the Bible and believe what it says?"

We can. But the year I spent at a Mennonite seminary some time ago brought me to understand that the Bible contains a wealth of meanings if we have the tools to unlock them. At that seminary I found a group of people using those tools, trying to help the church understand what the Bible says and means.

I also discovered that any interpretation is a step of faith. After all the words have been analyzed, the context understood, and the original languages parsed, nothing really happens until one takes an interpretation and makes it a part of one's life.

You don't have to be a scholar, of course, to do that. But the work of scholars can enrich our understanding of the Bible—if we allow them to lead us into new interpretations, insisting that these become a part of their lives as much as we make them a part of ours.

All of us, if we work at it

This doesn't mean there's no work for the rest of us. One of the geniuses of the Bible is that, while it can occupy theologians and scholars with interpretive questions for a lifetime, it can also speak to those of us who have far fewer tools with which to understand it.

If we're willing to try. When many of us come to realize the Bible is a difficult book to read, we get discouraged and quietly give up. Perhaps we've told ourselves the wrong thing about Bible study. Because we want people to read the Bible, we pretend it's like reading a novel—or the local newspaper. Parts of it can be. More of it, I've discovered, is just plain tough sledding!

Bible reading and study require discipline. Like other areas of the Christian life—prayer, worship, fasting, even spiritual retreats—they're things we have to plan to do. If not, they'll soon get crowded out by busy schedules.

Take daily Bible reading. There was a time I thought that how often I read the Bible didn't make much difference. Today I've come to miss my daily reading if something crowds it out. That "need" has grown in my life over time as I've come to discipline myself to read from the Bible every day.

God's Spirit will speak to all of us from the Word. Our responsibility is to give the time and energy it takes for the Bible and its truths to worm their way into our being.

Testing, with others, over time

Biblical interpretation is more than the Spirit speaking to us one by one, however. It must also be a function of that community.

Ryan Ahlgrim puts it this way (page 3): "All interpretations, individual and scholarly, are finally tested over time by the life of the faith community—locally, denominationally, and in the church universal."

We in the family of faith must also discipline ourselves to give time to listening to each other and testing our individual ideas about what the Spirit might be saying through the Scriptures. That's one reason I continue to attend Sunday school every week. Such testing also happens in small groups and one on one.

But the church community must not only discipline itself to discernment. We must also be willing to live with the "temporariness" of our interpretations. For in biblical interpretation, most often "only time will tell."

Thus each generation finds itself testing the understandings of previous ones. Some interpretations last over time, such as how we understand Jesus' command to love our enemies. Others become more temporary, such as the need to be different by what we wear.

Yet even as we acknowledge that interpretations may change, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we must work with the community's current interpretation as the best for us.

Yes, biblical interpretation is hard work. But it is a discipline to which God continues to call us—as individuals, as scholars, as a community. For it is only as we commit ourselves to the work that biblical interpretation requires that we will be known as "a people of the Book."—*jlp*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

I had always been intrigued by the women and men of church history who carefully tended the inner life. But I was always too busy, too hurried, too organized.

How my God met me (4):

The sounds of silence—a Type A struggles to be still

My life was defined by words like creating, organizing, leading, and doing. Even when I went on retreat it was with boxes of books, Bibles, and old journals!

by J. Daryl Byler

Fifteen years ago, at the first signs of spring, I took a journey into the heartland—*my* heartland. My vehicle was a monthlong silent retreat on the California coast. A special aunt arranged for several silent spaces: a boat docked at a Pacific Ocean marina and a cabin nestled among avocado and citrus trees on the hilly slopes outside Escondido.

The idea for such a time had been growing for many years. I had long been fascinated by the procession of biblical characters who seemed drawn to long stints of silence and solitude—Moses (Deut. 9:9-11), Elijah (1 Kings 19:4-18), Jesus (Mark 1:12-13), and Paul (Gal. 1:17). And I was intrigued by the women and men throughout church history who had carefully tended the inner life.

But I was always too busy, too hurried. My life was defined by words like creating, organizing, meeting, leading, and doing. College had been crammed full of sports, work teams, and part-time jobs—to say nothing of trying to make good grades. Upon graduation, I joined an intentional community in Mississippi and quickly became immersed in neighborhood development activities, working for justice, and

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Larry Augsburger:
Jesus slipped into Jerusalem by having a parade! 6

Schrag named general secretary of GC Mennonite Church 9

MBCM votes to integrate by as early as 1998 10

The same God who calls us to be still also 'makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth' and shatters the weapons of violence. It is this same God who will build the church.

helping to start a church. Now, at age 25, there were new reasons to be still. Significant questions begged for attention: Was I ready to get married? What would be the focus of my life?

So burdened with boxes of books, Bibles, and old journals—I boarded a bus and headed off to make peace with God, myself, and my destiny.

For 30 days I was alone—with only brief conversations with the "outside world." Gazing over the Pacific Ocean, I began with this prayer: "Help me to have a quiet spirit, God . . . I feel so small, so tense, so prone to schedule this whole time full of reading, structured prayer, and study. Show me the time for each thing."

"Be still, and know that I am God!"

—Psalm 46:10

Then, in typical goal-oriented fashion, I loaded my days full of activity. I read my journals for the previous seven years from cover to cover. I studied theology and church history. I poured over Mennonite classics like *Politics of Jesus* and *Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision.* Dutifully, I followed the exercises in Elizabeth O'Connor's *Search for Silence.* I spent hours reading Genesis, Psalms, Romans, and the Gospel of John. I made plans and revised plans. I prayed and fidgeted and fasted for long periods. Alternatively, I starved and stuffed myself.

Like Jacob wrestling with God, I wanted God to notice and bless me.

Sounds of silence. And what were the sounds of silence? To be sure, there were times of worship and wonder, like witnessing a spectacular sunset. "Watching the sun, slender over the mountaintop, is an incredible feeling of awe," I wrote. "Your creation is magnificent, God. You are so patient in your forming and building of nature—and in working with people to restore them to yourself."

But for the most part, I met a stranger I was not ready to meet—myself. And much of what I saw I did not like. I was afraid, angry, impatient, and insecure.

- *Fear.* I fought with fear of missing something. Perhaps it was simply the early onset of middle age crisis! In my journal I wrote, "One thing I am afraid of is not being in touch with the voice of God in my life, missing out on something important—failing to live life at its absolute fullest." I was afraid that, in the end, my life would not count for much.

Being by myself seemed to accentuate my fears. I could not hide in a crowd or behind my ordinary activities and routines. At one low point I scribbled: "I feel so alone . . . so frightened . . . time goes slow . . . and days shuffle by."

- *Impatience.* I warred with impatience. Life was simply too short to spend time waiting. One journal entry reads: "I took a walk at 5:30 a.m. to the beach to watch the waves and the sunrise. Waiting for the sun to come up, I felt cold and impatient. I nearly gave up, assuming it wouldn't peek through today—a symbol of my impatience, God, my failure to wait on your timing."
- *Sinfulness.* I was acutely aware of my dark side, my sin. After several days of fasting I wrote, "This morning the ache in my legs is gone. My soul aches, though, with the awareness of my sinfulness . . . my desire to justify my goodness and to hide from the things I must discover about myself. Why, God, is it so hard to admit that I am a sinner?" Indeed, I wanted—with a single confession—to cast aside my sinful nature and never be troubled by it again!

Generally, I had been a "good kid" growing up—never one to get into much trouble. Now I was troubled by the burden of "living on a pedestal"—an elevation I had not discouraged. "The underlying shadow of my dark side," I wrote, "is that I feel that I am—or ought to be—the 'best Christian.' This not only makes my relationships competitive, it does not free me to affirm and pull out the strengths in other Christians, especially in areas where I am weak."

- *Drivenness.* Being alone, there was no one to blame for my busyness. I was compelled to admit that I was a driven person. No one held me to a schedule. But, in my mind, I was not reading enough books. I was not praying enough. I even went about my leisure activity, crocheting, with great intensity—completing two full-size afghans!

"The 'god' I deal with most is being product-oriented, being in a rush to finish one thing so I can get on to the next," I wrote. "Slow me down, Lord . . . help me to be led by your Spirit, not by the compulsion to produce, to do many things." I realized that I was too quick to move from one activity to the next, rarely stopping to celebrate the completion of anything.

• *Unloved.* Many journal entries reflected just how little I felt loved by God: "I need to slow down and bask in your love . . . God, heal my fears and hurts and pride. Make me whole." On another occasion I wrote, "Do I really believe that God loves me? What things in my life are blocking me from experiencing your love in its fullness, God?"

A turning point came with the abrupt end of an eight-day fast. It finally dawned on me that—with my disciplined regimen—I was trying to be acceptable to God rather than simply accepting God's love and grace. I imagined myself as one of the children brought to Jesus for blessing—sitting in his lap, loved simply for being.

A rare interaction with Charlie, the owner of the citrus-avocado ranch, provided another reminder of God's initiative in loving us and seeking us out. One day I tagged along while Charlie looked for fruit missed by the pickers. Green avocados against green leaves are difficult to see. But Charlie was persistent. The image inspired this journal entry: "Trying to find avocados yesterday in 'picked-through' trees reminded me of the searching qualities of your love, God. You continue to look for 'hidden fruit'. . . not necessarily picking the obvious fruit that is readily seen."

Sense of call. As I summarized my month of silence, several things had become more focused. Indeed, I felt ready to commit to marriage—and hoped that Cindy felt the same! Other things seemed more clear as well.

• *Call to community.* Perhaps it was just intense loneliness from an extended time of solitude. Whatever the case, I felt a deep longing for community: "You are calling me to community . . . to supportive, accountable relationships with other persons who are deeply committed to you, to each other, and to the radical values of God's kingdom."

• *Call to ministry.* It was during this retreat that I first owned my call to ministry—a rounded ministry that combined evangelism with justice and peace. I became aware of a deep concern for persons at the margins and the structures that caused persons to suffer. I knew that I wanted to spend my life encouraging the church.

• *Call to be still.* Perhaps the most powerful "take away" from my retreat was the call to be still. Psalm 46:10 became my theme verse: "Be still, and know that I am God!" One translation says, "Cease striving, and know that I am God." As a social activist I was intent on saving the world—or at least a small piece of it! Too often, my life swirled around the immediate and urgent. Being still helped put things in perspective—to see the hand of God in the larger tapestry of life. One day by the Pacific I wrote: "Thank you, God, for the ocean. It is like life in many ways. Up close it looks choppy and the waves seem so big. But looking across the horizon, the ocean rolls gently and gives a feeling of peace."

Daryl and Cindy Byler with their family (from left): Jeremy (7), Jessica (13), and Holden (12).

In the end I packed up my books, went sailing on the Pacific Ocean, and just waited and listened to the sounds of silence—to the still, small voice of God.

How have I been changed? Fifteen years of marriage and three children later, I am still too goal-oriented. I still try to pack just one more activity into an already full day. I'm still too quick to measure a successful day by whether I finish everything on my "to do list" —rather than by how graciously I handle the day's interruptions and unexpected events. I often put in longer days at the office than I'd like. I still disdain waiting—in checkout lines and airport terminals, for computers to boot up and traffic signals to turn.

But meeting myself and experiencing the embrace of God's love those fifteen years ago

(continued on page 4)

In the end, I packed up my journals and my books and went sailing on the Pacific Ocean, listening in the sounds of silence for the still, small voice of God.

(continued from page 3)

have helped me learn to pull back. It has left an indelible imprint that seems to hold my life in check. My retreats these days are shorter and generally in the company of mentors. In the political whirl of Washington, D.C., I'm learning to build in times each day for silence and stillness. And when I've had a horrible day, I am just a bit quicker to remember that God's love is not dependent on my performance.

Oh, I'm still a Type A personality. I hope always to be busy encouraging the church and working for peace and justice. But I'm learning that one of the most important parts of that work is remembering to wait upon God—allowing God to open doors. For in the end, the same God who calls us to be still also "makes wars cease to the end of the earth" and shatters the weapons of violence (Ps. 46:9). In the end, it is God who builds the church.

Trappist monk Thomas Merton said of our need to be still and silent, "Here is an unspeakable secret: paradise is all around us and we do not understand. It is wide open . . . [but] we are off 'one to his farm and another to his merchandise.' Lights on. Clocks ticking. Thermostats working. Stoves cooking. Electric shavers filling radios with static. 'Wisdom,' cries the dawn deacon, but we do not attend." Another has written: "Wisdom is made up of ten parts, nine of which are silence."

In our culture jammed full of noise and activity—from the first buzz of the alarm clock to the click of the remote turning off the 11 o'clock news—I'm learning, ever so slowly, to be still. For in the stillness, the sounds of silence continue to speak and shape my life.

J. Daryl Byler is director of the Washington Office of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Previously he served as pastor and attorney in Meridian, Miss. He and his family attend Washington Community Fellowship.

***"Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you."*—Ps. 130:1-4a**

Gospel Herald

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I applaud your decision to run the item, ***Dancing at the Table . . .*** (Jan. 9). But I see it as less an act of courage, as some suggested in letters that followed, and more an act of necessity. As fringe members of the Mennonite body, gay members need support from the congregation and, barring this, certainly from each other. The real courage lies in those willing to express their uniqueness despite opposition.

Jay Keener
Mt. Rainier, Md.

Paying Attention to the Word in the Routine (Feb. 27). Every time I reread Keith Graber Miller's article, I begin to understand more of what he wants to teach us.

His son Niles' question, "Where is God?" is one that millions of Christians have asked through the centuries. Even Jesus' disciples asked it (see John 14).

Graber Miller's development is exactly what Jesus said in reassuring his fearful twelve. They would not escape from the present life; instead, both he and the Father were coming back to live with them.

Is that what Jesus meant when he told the disciples that God has many mansions (abodes)? Is this why Jesus could tell them to no longer fear and be troubled?

We do not have many saints in our church that I'm aware of. But, as Graber Miller shows us, we do have thousands of believers living very routine lives. God is happy to be dwelling in our humdrumness.

Chester C. Osborne
Hesston, Kan.

Promise Keepers: a Movement of Hope—and a Wellspring of Debate (Feb. 6). Promise Keepers has been good for me, my church, and my family. While attending the Promise Keepers conference in Washington, D.C., last summer, I made a commitment to support my church and my pastor, to be a better father and husband, and to be involved in a men's prayer group at church. I am looking forward again to another Promise Keepers conference this summer in Pittsburgh.

These conferences bring thousands of men together to worship God, to lift up Jesus, and to celebrate what God has done for us. The speakers challenge men to improve areas of our lives that need to be improved. They encourage us to recommit ourselves to the biblical principles that we know.

The conferences do not take away anything from the spiritual work of women in the home or in the church. There is certainly enough for both men and women to do side by side for the kingdom.

I don't look at Promise Keepers only as a men's movement. I look at it as a much-needed, ongoing revival for men. I see Promise Keepers hand in hand with the church working toward the same goals.

Promise Keepers may not be for all men. I can accept that some decide not to be involved for one reason or another. But I don't understand those who think they have to analyze Promise Keepers and try to find something wrong with it. We can really miss blessings in our lives if we don't allow the Holy Spirit to work in new and different ways.

Jon Peachey
Belleville, Pa.

Thanks for printing the article by Kenneth L. Sensenig, ***Surely the God Who Knew the Heart of Naaman Knows the Heart of Yassir*** (Mar. 5). It brought global connections and biblical light to my Thursday morning devotions.

Vern Rempel
Lancaster, Pa.

I want to commend you for the new series, ***How My God Has Met Me.*** You have gained a more devoted fan of your magazine, for I will be looking forward with great anticipation and longing as I see how others have persevered and have found God in many different ways.

This series will strengthen the faith of many people. It will serve as an encouragement to all who read it. In fact, I predict that it will become the most popular and helpful series of articles for your readers as they continue their spiritual journeys through life.

Susan Stempel
Yankton, S.D.

Once again, we citizens of the United States are about to embark on the quadrennial ritual of electing national leaders. Even though this is changing, Mennonites generally do not flaunt their political leanings. But as we draw near to election day next November, it is important that we consider how our beliefs square with the positions of those for whom we vote.

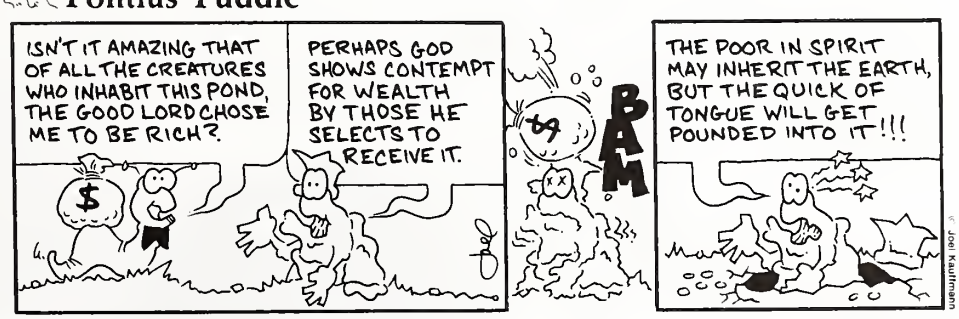
Politics hold problems for Mennonites. Politics implies government, government implies the state, and the state has the right to use coercive force. This is clearly stated in Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome (Rom. 13:3-4). It is restated in 1 Pet. 2:13-14. Even though this use of force is biblically legitimate, we give lip service to the idea that it is anathema to Mennonites.

From my vantage point in north central Indiana, it seems that the intelligentsia of the Mennonite church consistently align themselves with the more socially liberal political party. Most of the people in the pews, by contrast, vote a preference for the more conservative party.

But however it is that we vote, we must consider the government philosophies of those for whom they vote and determine how well they align with our beliefs.

Royce Buller
Goshen, Ind.

Pontius' Puddle



Jesus slipped into

Because Jesus understood the true nature of the battle between good and evil, he could thumb his nose at the dangers.

by Larry Augsburger

One of the unusual things about Goshen (Ind.) College is the railroad track running through campus. Some people might consider a railroad track on campus a negative factor, but I never did. I like trains, and I enjoyed their presence when I was a student. I would often detect the vibrations of an approaching train as I studied and would go to the window to watch it go by. One cold spring day in my senior year, one of those trains didn't go by—it derailed at the south end of campus. This happened just as chapel was winding up, and most of us were unaware of it as we headed for our next classes. But when Stanley Shank arrived at Romans class, he informed us what had happened and dismissed us for awhile to observe the wreckage. It was an awesome scene of twisted cars and track, and the next couple days were fascinating as we watched the crews clean up the mess.

Interest in the cleanup had waned by the time everything was back together and no one paid attention to the arrival of the first train. But I happened to notice it approaching, and I ran out to watch it cross the new track. "Tiptoeing" is the best explanation I can give of how that train crossed that stretch of new, untested track. It was as if the engineer was testing each inch of the track before he went on to the next inch.

The engineer was being obedient to an inherent human trait—caution about going where we anticipate danger. If we think there is a rattlesnake in the grass, we decide not to walk through the grass. If we think a brick wall may collapse, we choose to walk on the other side of the street. And if we can't avoid danger, we take all precautions. It is our human tendency to minimize and avoid as much danger as we possibly can.

John reports that Jerusalem was a dangerous place for Jesus. In John 10 Jesus leaves town in response to the animosity of the Jews. In John 11 the Sanhedrin meets to discuss how to keep people from believing in him, and Caiaphas counsels that one person must die rather than the whole nation—in effect, Jesus' death warrant. The whole city is charged with expectancy that something is going to happen, and the Jewish leaders lie in wait to arrest him.

Jerusalem was not a safe place for Jesus. It was a trap. He was assured that if he stepped foot there he would be arrested and killed. All indications were that he should turn tail and run, or that if he was going to be foolish enough to enter, he should do it under cover or with a huge body guard of armed men.

But Jesus slipped into Jerusalem by having a parade (John 12:12-15). Thumbing his nose at the danger and staring his enemies squarely in the eye, he marched into town and issued the challenge, "What are you going to do about it?"

Jesus could enter Jerusalem in a parade because he understood the true nature of the battle between good and evil. He could do it because he knew that ultimately the spiritual always arises over the physical and good transcends over evil. He knew that God was with him.

Jesus was in a unique position where he could look over the ridge from the physical into the eternal. On this side he could see what appeared to be the triumph of the forces of evil rising up to strike him down and lay him in his grave. But he could also see that the apparent triumph of evil would be turned into the ultimate victory of good.

Jesus says to us through his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, "Have no fear about the forces of this world. All they can do is to kill your body; they can ridicule you; they can shame you; they can make life very hard. But they cannot harm your soul, your salvation, your relationship with God. You are secure in God. You can afford—in fact you are called—to march out courageously into battle, to face the forces of evil and the forces that are keeping you from entering into the fullness of relationship."

Palm Sunday 1995 was the 50th anniversary

Jerusalem by having a parade!

of the execution of Dietrich Bonhoeffer at the hand of the Nazis in the Flossenburg concentration camp. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, author of the great classic, *The Cost of Discipleship,* is considered one of the most brilliant theologians of twentieth century. He did not have to die. He could have chosen to go along with Adolf Hitler's nazification of the German church. But he continued to uphold orthodox Christianity. He became a leader of the confessing church, which refused to accept the dictates of the Nazis. Bonhoeffer led its seminary until the Gestapo shut it down.

Bonhoeffer could have chosen to sit out the war in America. He actually came to New York in June of 1939. But he felt so guilty that he returned home to Germany in July, writing to a friend, "I have made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trial of this time with my people."

But unfortunately Bonhoeffer did not survive the war. Arrested April 5, 1943, for his resistance to Hitler, he was hanged April 9, 1945, less than a week before the Allies liberated Flossenburg.

Bonhoeffer did not blink in the face of danger. He courageously marched into Jerusalem, staring Hitler's Gestapo right in the eye. In an article entitled, "Stations on the Road to Freedom," he counsels, "Faint not, nor fear, but go out to the storm and the action, trusting in God whose commandment you faithfully follow. Freedom exultant will welcome your spirit with joy."

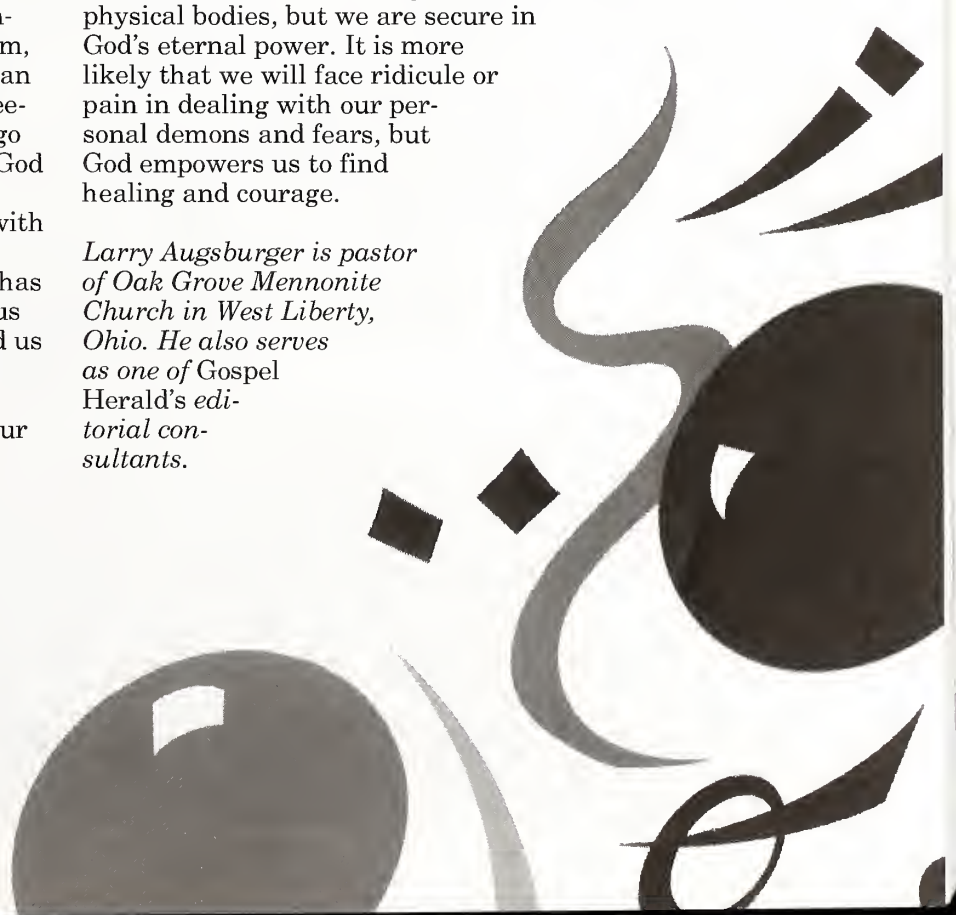
None of us face the temple police of Caiaphas or the Gestapo of Adolf Hitler, but many of us have a place or places where God would lead us that we are not interested in going. At this juncture in history, it likely will not mean facing down the forces of evil at the risk of our lives as it meant for Jesus and Bonhoeffer. There may come a time when we will face a choice between obedience with martyrdom or apostasy with comfort.

But it is more likely that God's leading us where we would rather not go will mean grappling with some personal demons from the past or the present that interfere with our relationship with Jesus. It may mean having the courage to look deep inside at some issue hidden for years. It may mean we will have to address some sin over which we have no victory. It may mean taking the steps necessary to resolve a difficult issue of relationship. It may mean becoming a more faithful witness for God, even though we know that we will face ridicule, and even though we're not sure we want to face the resulting questions and demands.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem tells us that we can face the things we fear in life with courage. God protects, supports, and enables us, no matter what we face. There may be times when we will, like Jesus and Bonhoeffer, face the actual forces of evil prepared to physically harm us. But it is more likely that we will need to face personal demons and fears.

We can still have a parade, because God is the parade marshall. In the most extreme cases, the forces of evil may strike down our physical bodies, but we are secure in God's eternal power. It is more likely that we will face ridicule or pain in dealing with our personal demons and fears, but God empowers us to find healing and courage.

Larry Augsburger is pastor of Oak Grove Mennonite Church in West Liberty, Ohio. He also serves as one of Gospel Herald's *editorial consultants.*



Jesus' entry into Jerusalem tells us we can face the things we fear in life with courage. God protects, supports, and enables, no matter what comes our way.

Groups troubled by CIA provision for use of clergy for covert work

Religious groups recently expressed concern about a loophole in CIA policy that allows the U.S. spy agency to use clergy and mission workers, as well as journalists and Peace Corps workers, for covert work overseas.

The rules forbid the CIA from hiring or establishing intelligence relationships "with any U.S. clergy or missionary . . . who is sent out by a mission or church organization to preach, teach, heal, or proselytize." But the *Washington Post* reports that a little-noticed provision allows the CIA director to waive the ban in certain circumstances.

Numerous religious groups sharply criticized the loophole, saying that such a move could undermine efforts at reconciliation and conflict resolution. "Our views don't always coincide with the U.S. government's," says R. Lawrence Turnipseed of Church World Service. "Our being able to work and function effectively depends on our colleagues being able to know we are independent."—*Christian Century*

New translation of Pentateuch reveals nuances of original language

A new English translation of the first five books of the Bible tries to capture the "rhythms, syntax, and outright quirkiness of biblical Hebrew," according to *Newsweek*. *The Five Books of Moses* by Jewish scholar Everett Fox was 27 years in the making. The five books are put in verse form, and Fox uses alliteration and repetition of key words and images for stylistic effect.

The Fox translation of Gen. 2:16-17 is as follows: "YHWH, God, commanded concerning the human, saying: From every (other) tree of the garden you may eat, yes, eat, but from the Tree of the Knowing of Good and Evil—you are not to eat from it, for on the day that you eat from it, you must die, yes, die."

—*Newsweek*

Toronto Blessing congregation asked to leave Vineyard association

The Toronto Airport Vineyard Fellowship that gave birth to the Pentecostal worship style called the Toronto Blessing has been asked to leave its parent church body.

A Dec. 13 letter from the Association of Vineyard Churches said that the congregation placed "extrabiblical" meaning on the animal sounds and other "exotic" occurrences that occur there regularly, and that the group showcased these dramatic practices to call attention to itself.

Over the past year some 750,000 people from around the world have visited the Toronto congregation, where renewal meetings are marked by worshipers weeping, groaning, falling on the ground, and making sounds described as animal-like.

Assistant pastor Steve Long of the Toronto congregation said his church would leave the association as of Jan. 20 but hoped the church could maintain informal connections to the larger Pentecostal group.—*Christian Century*

Churches start company that helps African-Americans buy own homes

Five of the largest black church groups in the United States have announced the creation of a company that will help businesses sell a variety of consumer products and services to congregational members while earmarking part of the profits to help African-Americans buy their own homes. The denominations unveiled their plan on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday—a plan to channel some of the $400 billion annually spent by African-American consumers back into the black community.

Revelation Corp. of America, a for-profit company, will give a variety of firms—selling everything from automobile supplies to groceries to insurance—an inside track to reach the five denominations' estimated 20 million members. In return, the firms will give church members discounts on goods and services and provide rebates to the denominations. The churches will then invest a portion of those rebates to fund housing construction and underwrite mortgages for African Americans.

—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Taizé movement from France gains prominence in the United States

Taizé, an ecumenical communal prayer movement based in France, is taking root in the United States. Established in 1940, the Taizé community emphasizes prayer, spirituality, simplicity, meditation, and community involvement. Taizé singing includes plain, repetitive melodies that are sung, harmonized, or improvised.

An annual international Taizé prayer gathering drew 110,000 adherents to Paris last winter. In the United States, increasing numbers of people are implementing the songs and prayers of the Taizé community in worship services.—*National and International Religion Report*

Germany bans controversial Benetton advertisements

A German appeals court recently banned three controversial Benetton advertisements from display in Germany, claiming the ads exploited suffering. Child laborers, a human body stamped with an "HIV-positive" inscription, and a waterfowl stuck in an oil slick are the images used in the ads by the Italian clothing company.

Adbusters Media Foundation, a group formed to protest corporate advertising, has also reacted to the advertisements with "anti-ads." One of their spoofs on Benetton shows a man with bulging eyes and money stuffed into his mouth and reads "The True Colors of Benetton."—*Sojourners*

To pray is to take notice of the wonder, to regain a sense of the mystery that animates all beings, the divine margin in all attainments. Prayer is our humble answer to the inconceivable surprise of living. It is all we can offer in return for the mystery by which we live.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel in *The Other Side*

Schrag named general secretary of General Conference Mennonite Church

James Schrag

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—When James Schrag, 51, pastor of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio, begins his work as general secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) Aug. 15, he knows he won't be stepping into "a glamour job." In fact, he says, he will need "a healthy measure of humility" in order to effectively lead the 64,000-member denomination during a critical time in its history as it moves toward integration with the 96,000-member Mennonite Church (MC).

Schrag will replace Vern Preheim, who has served as GC general secretary since 1980. The GC General Board approved Schrag's appointment at its annual Council of Commissions.

Describing himself as "a big-picture, future-oriented" person, Schrag says he was willing to accept this call because "we are at a juncture of a major transition in the church. The transition itself is what energizes me. This is a window of opportunity. God is giving two groups of the Mennonite church another chance to make a difference."

Schrag has been a longtime advocate of integration. He has organized meetings of dual-conference congregations since 1989 and serves as their contact person.

Schrag sees the "process of integration as every bit as important as the outcome. Have we been inclusive and fair? There is no way we can arrive at a good outcome without a good process."

Issues other than integration need to be addressed if the Mennonite church wants to have a viable future, says Schrag, who has served with the dually affiliated Oak Grove Mennonite Church since 1985.

For starters, the church needs to do a better job of understanding and affirming the younger generation. There is little room for the generational conflict in many congregations today, he says, noting that the older generation tends to be more program-oriented, while the younger generation is more relationship-oriented.

In addition, he says, "I don't think people in the pews are asking for more finely tuned programs. They want encouragement and direction. They want a denomination that understands their spiritual needs. People are not asking the church to go broader; they are asking the church to go deeper."

Schrag received a master of divinity degree in 1973 from Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and has pastored for 23 years. He has served on the GC program committee, GC Western District Conference education committee, Bethel College board, and the MC Ohio Conference executive committee. He currently is the chairperson of the GC higher education council.

Schrag and his wife, Judy, who is a teacher, served with Mennonite Central Committee in Kenya from 1967-1970. They have three daughters.

—*Carla Reimer*

Taiwanese Mennonites speak to government

Taiwan (MWC)—The Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan is urging the Taiwan government to gain early entrance into the United Nations and other international organizations.

In a statement adopted unanimously by the delegates to the 38th annual conference of Mennonites in Taiwan on March 4, the fellowship also took a stand against the Chinese Beijing government's "use of the media to attack Taiwan, missile testing exercises near Taiwan's shores, and the plots to invade Taiwan that threaten us."

Taiwanese Mennonites also report that they "oppose the flood of international drug trafficking, economic exploitation and oppression, the arms race, and threat of war and all forms of violence and acts of terrorism that endanger and destroy peace."

In the statement, the Mennonites spoke out against "government administrators who use their positions of authority and institutions to join with the underworld for retention of political power, vote-buying, greed, and the creation of inequitable economic conditions and an unjust society."

Let it rain. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Zambians received a shipment of 30 metric tons of maize and 20 metric tons of ground nut seeds delivered by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The Zambian Brethren in Christ churches are asking for prayer for adequate rain in March and April, critical months in the growing season. Ten years of inadequate rainfall and severe droughts in 1992 and 1995 in Zambia's southern provinces have challenged the church's emotional and spiritual resources. Late last year Enock Shamapani, bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia, said, "We knew it was going to be bad, but not this bad. We have seen malnutrition in adults that we did not see before." Shamapani reports that as government aid has dwindled and food program supplies exhausted, more people are walking miles to his office each day asking for food. Even though more rain has fallen so far this season than all of last year, in some places it has been either too much at once or not enough at the right time. Rain is crucial during March and April to help the tasseled maize mature completely.

—*Harriet Sider Bicksler*

MBCM directors vote to transfer program to integrated structure by as early as 1998

Elkhart, Ind.—"Lent is a time of relinquishment," Sue Clemmer Steiner of Waterloo, Ont., told the directors of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries in an opening devotional at their meeting here Mar. 15-16.

"What is God asking the MBCM board to give up?" Steiner asked. Directors responded by agreeing "to transfer its duties into an integrated congregational resources and services agency by as early as Feb. 1, 1998."

"This means there will be a completely new entity with a completely new board and a new way of operating," said Everett Thomas, MBCM's CEO. "It means we're out of business," said Peter Wiebe, Phoenix, Ariz.

"Is this moving too fast?" board members asked each other.

"If I'm a delegate to the next General Assembly, I'll go expecting to hear how we're going to integrate," said Howard Miller, Harrisonburg, Va. "But instead I'll hear how we're already integrated."

"This can be seen as very proactive and assertive," said Thomas. "But it is a way of getting the integration discussion on the table."

A structural vision. Even as it made moves to nudge integration along, the MBCM board expressed concern about not yet having a comprehensive plan for the structures of the new Mennonite church. They agreed to ask the Integration Committee "to give active guidance to the total integration process, holding before us an overall structural vision for our integrated mission."

MBCM's statement to the Integration Committee also asks for the use of outside consultants in developing a new structure and not just reliance on the work of current staff.

"I want integration to proceed in a manner that leaves open the most possible room for newness and God's Spirit to work among us in different ways," said Steiner.

As a step toward what could become a new congregational resources and services structure, MBCM's directors agreed to merge its leadership staff with work being done by counterparts in the General Conference Mennonite Church. Target date for one ministerial leadership office is Feb. 1997.

But the MBCM directors decided not to move as fast in integrating Christian education work with that being done by the GC Commission on Education (COE). They agreed that the conversations should continue but that the Congregational Literature Division of the Mennonite Publishing House also be included in the discussions.

Ministering to young adults also occupied considerable discussion at the MBCM meeting. The board has been asked by the Mennonite Church General Board to be responsible for work in this area.

"Do we begin something on our own, or do we use what the GCs are already doing?" asked Thomas.

The board heard from Ken Hawkley, Columbus, Ohio, about his work with young adults for COE. Recognizing Hawkley's work is mostly with young adults who are in the church, MBCM directors asked if they should focus more on young adults no longer relating to the church. They agreed to consult with the church's young adult network before making a decision.

Other business. Board members learned MBCM had its best financial year ever in 1995. Income of $463,00 and expenses of $430,000 gave it an operating balance of $33,300. Contributions from congregations were up 4.8 percent, Thomas told the board.

With this kind of year behind them, MBCM directors adopted a budget of $469,225 for the current year. This includes hiring part-time staff, in cooperation with the GC Commission on Home Ministries, for work in evangelism and church growth.

Board members heard that response to new guidelines for establishing pastors' salaries has been mostly positive. They authorized staff to continue work on implementing the guidelines.

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Lancaster Conference deals with 'far-flungness'

Lancaster, Pa.—"How will we hold together given our 'far-flungness'?" Phyllis Pellman Good asked in her presentation, "Where is Lancaster Conference Headed?" at the annual meeting here. "How will we cultivate our life together? What's our glue?"

Much of the discussion at the March 15-17 meeting of the largest conference of the Mennonite Church centered on what that glue will be. Lancaster Conference congregations worship in 11 states and 13 languages, according to moderator Ervin Stutzman, and 2,850 people have joined the conference in the last ten years. Also, increasing theological, economic, ethnic, and educational diversity means that staying together as a conference will "take a lot of discussion and a lot of openness," according to Pellman Good.

A new "open-mike" format allowed delegates and ministers to respond to speakers and report on issues in their congregations during a time formerly filled with agency reports.

Ministers affirmed the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* adopted by the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church at Wichita '95. They also approved a vision statement for the conference that includes goals for church growth and giving.

The statement includes an item about working at specific ways to "discern and release the gifts of all members . . . equipping and empowering them to serve according to the grace that God has given them." Lancaster Conference has ordained no women, but several participants questioned the implications of this item in hallway conversations and other meetings during the weekend. "We will have to do some fancy footwork if we're going to avoid the issue of ordaining women," said Leon Miller, pastor of Charlotte Street Mennonite Church.

Friday's ministers meeting also featured financial reports, greetings from the president of the Kekchi Mennonite Church in Guatemala, and introduction of seven new congregations.

Some 1,000 youth filled the Lancaster Mennonite High School auditorium on Friday night for a "Wake Up!" rally led by Mike Yaconelli. After a concert by "Crossmovement," several youth remained for a time of prayer and counseling.

James Lapp, former general secretary of the Mennonite Church, addressed the conference on Saturday evening. In a world of "more brokenness than unity, more violence than peace," Lapp said, "in God's new temple there are no categories . . . all are members of the household of God."

Participants chose from 54 seminars on Sunday afternoon, and a special two-hour consultation on health care and retirement needs of older adults was held. Twelve workers were commissioned by Eastern Mennonite Missions on Sunday evening, and Richard Landis of EMM spoke on "Vision for Power."

—*Valerie Weaver*

Daniel B. Terenko displays some of the children's Bible materials produced by the publishing house of Odessa Theological Seminary and Bible College. Terenko is managing director of the house, which now generates substantial funds for the seminary. MCC is a partner in this printing project.

'No one is driving the bus . . .'

Workers in Ukraine alarmed at worsening conditions

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers in the former Soviet Union are alarmed by ever-worsening conditions in the Ukraine. MCC recently delivered two containers of relief and medical supplies to the port city of Odessa, and a third container of milk powder and canned meat went to Donetsk.

MCC country representative Walter Bergen reports that on Feb. 14, Russia cut the Ukraine's connections to the integrated electricity grid, causing widespread power outages.

"Industry is at a standstill, and hospitals in all but major centers are not functioning or are functioning on an emergency footing," Bergen says.

MCC worker Mary Raber, who teaches at Donetsk Christian University, visited parts of the Ukraine and neighboring Maldova in December and January.

"This place is unraveling," Raber writes in a report. "Conditions have worsened for most people even since the summer. People who were optimistic and energetic seem much less hopeful. Many people are without basic necessities."

System is 'careening along.' "I have heard of prisoners starving and of abysmal conditions in orphanages," Raber writes. "Many more children, from infants to adolescents, are being abandoned than ever before."

Raber says public institutions are in disarray, lacking supplies and funds to pay employees. Transport workers, teachers, hospital personnel, and many others often wait months for a salary.

People sense that the government lacks control or compassion, she says. "The general feeling is that no one is driving the bus anymore, that the whole system is just careening along."

"We expect to respond soon with a shipment that will include canned beef, medical supplies, school kits, and possibly items of personal hygiene," says MCC material resources coordinator Kevin King.

"The big picture looks bleak in the Ukraine," says Bergen, "but we do see signs of hope." For example, more church leaders are seeing the value of a printing project of MCC and Odessa Theological Seminary. Three years ago, MCC helped Odessa buy printing equipment as part of the Old Testament Commentary project. That equipment now prints books, calendars, and stationery. Sales provide a large portion of the seminary's operating budget.—*Emily Will*

Gulf States Conference reports swift growth

Meridian, Miss.—Gulf States Mennonite Conference has stretched from 475 members in 1985 to 725 in 1995, according to figures from the *Mennonite Yearbook*. Alan Yoder, director of church development and evangelism for Mennonite Board of Missions, reports that this growth makes Gulf States Conference the fastest growing conference in the Mennonite Church during the past decade.

David Kniss, mission coordinator for Gulf States Conference, points out that churches grew most rapidly during the past five years. He notes that this spurt of growth came at the same time that Gulf States reactivated its mission commission and began funding a mission staff person. "People were faced again with the challenge of reaching out beyond themselves," says Kniss.

Intentional study. A two-year challenge, "Operation Outreach," focused the evangelism efforts of the conference. "The thing that helped as much as anything was the intentional study of evangelism by every adult in every congregation in the conference," Kniss says.

Two new churches are forming in the Gulf States Conference. Bob and Edea Baldwin were commissioned in early 1996 for church planting, and Steve Cheramie, tribal chairman of the Houma Indians, is beginning a network of house churches in southern Louisiana.

During 1996 the mission commission of the conference will focus on evangelism through developing small groups.

—*Elaine Maust*

Puerto Rico churches discuss healing and hope

Ponce, Puerto Rico—The Conference of Mennonite Churches in Puerto Rico met here March 1-3 for the first time as the 21st conference of Mennonite Churches of North America. The 10-year vision of the Mennonite Church directed their proceedings through the theme, "Walking Toward the Year 2000 in Healing and Hope."

Founded in 1955, the Puerto Rico Conference joined the Mennonite Church of North America in 1995.

Delegates from the 11 congregations in the conference struggled to set a budget for the coming year. The position of executive secretary was reduced to half-time, and several congregations who had not met their financial commitments the previous year reaffirmed their commitment to the conference.

The assembly passed a motion to transfer a property title from a congregation that separated from the conference 18 years ago. After debate, a majority of the assembly accepted the congregation's offer of $4,000 for the title.

Three students from the Mennonite Bible Institute graduated on Sunday afternoon. They were the first graduates of the school for more than a decade.—*Ron Collins*

Governments take steps to ban land mines

Washington, D.C. (MCC)—Both the United States and Canada took important steps in January toward a world free of land mines.

Amidst turmoil over the government shutdown and efforts to balance the budget, a significant but largely unnoticed event occurred in the United States. On Jan. 26 President Clinton signed into law a one-year moratorium on the use of antipersonnel land mines by U.S. forces.

The bill was championed by Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont and Rep. Lane Evans of Illinois. On the U.S. Senate floor, Sen. Leahy declared, "This amendment represents a dramatic shift in the policy of the U.S. government, from one that has lagged behind several of our NATO allies to one that aims to exert U.S. leadership to build international support for ridding the world of these inhumane weapons."

The U.S. moratorium will take effect in 1999. The bill also extends the existing moratorium on U.S. exports of antipersonnel land mines for another year.

Broad-based, international effort. The Canadian government took a similar step on Jan. 17. The Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers declared a "comprehensive unilateral moratorium on the production, export, and operational use of antipersonnel land mines." Canada does not currently produce, export, or use antipersonnel mines, but until now this had been merely a matter of practice and not official government policy.

The threat of land mines and the methods used to remove them are similar to unexploded, 30-year-old cluster bombs that maim and kill in Laos.

Unexploded cluster bombs and land mines both can lie dormant for years and explode at the slightest touch. Their victims are often children and other civilians.

At least 100 million unexploded mines are scattered around the world. These can remain lethal for 50 years or more. Antipersonnel land mines are designed to blast shrapnel into a body, tearing apart an arm or leg, often requiring amputation.

A broad-based, international effort is underway to ban land mines in the same manner that chemical and biological weapons are banned.

—Byron Peachey and Joanne Epp

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- **Workers trapped in Gaza.** Mennonite Central Committee workers Sonia and Alain Epp Weaver and their children have been unable to leave the Gaza Strip for two weeks due to the Israeli closure of its Gaza border following three bomb attacks in Israel. MCC workers John F. Lapp and Chip Poston, based in Jerusalem, have been prevented from traveling to Gaza to visit MCC's development projects. Supplies have dwindled since the unprecedented closure, and MCC West Bank employee Ibrahim Matar estimates losses of $3-4 million daily to Gaza's economy.

- **Choice Books breaks record.** Choice Books reports a record number of books sold in one day—72,499—on Feb. 20. A good monthly total averages around 150,000 books sold, according to John Bomberger, director of Choice Books. The Christian bookselling organization sold a total of 1,580,452 books in 1995.

- **Donations invited for fund.** Mennonite Central Committee U.S. peace and justice ministries is again inviting contributions for the "Taxes for Peace" fund. Since 1972 the fund has allowed people who withhold the portion of their taxes that would go for military purposes to contribute that money to peacemaking initiatives. In 1996, the funds will bolster efforts to halt the production of cluster bombs and landmines and support resources on conscientious objection to military service and taxes. Contributions made payable to MCC can be sent to "Taxes for Peace," MCC U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

- **Professor named to panel.** A national panel on the future of colleges and churches includes Keith Graber Miller, associate professor of Bible, religion, and philosophy at Goshen (Ind.) College. Graber Miller has been named to the Rhodes Consultation on the Future of Church-Related Colleges, made up of 12 representatives from Protestant and Roman Catholic colleges and universities in the United States.

- ***On the Line* celebrates 25 years.** *On the Line,* a Mennonite periodical for children ages nine and up, celebrated its 25th birthday with a haiku contest. More than 130 readers sent haiku for the contest, a repeat of one promoted in the first edition of the periodical in 1971. Winners of this year's contest were Fawn Mayer of Lowville, N.Y.; Dawn Stoltzfus of Belleville, Pa.; Jill Fidler of Broadway, Va.; and Jerilyn Moser of Copenhagen, N.Y.

- **This space available.** *Gospel Herald* publishes job openings, coming events, new resources, and other notices free of charge to Mennonite-related institutions. Selected items are printed one time only and are edited to follow a standard format. Announcements for coming events should be sent at least three weeks in advance of the date. Send items to 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Gayle Sheller was installed as pastor of Eugene (Ore.) Mennonite Church on Jan. 21 by Larry Hauder.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Marilyn and Nelson Blank, with Christopher, Cherissa, Jesse, and Melissa, returned to Papua New Guinea on March 19 after a ten-month home leave. They are serving with Eastern Mennonite Missions and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Ed and Joan McManness, with Joshua, Laura Beth, and Ian Richard, arrived in the United States on March 8 after four years in Asia with Eastern Mennonite Missions. Their address is c/o R. E. Shaffer, 322 Gettys St., Gettysburg, PA 17325.

- **Coming events:**

Staley lectures by Tony and Peggy Campolo, Goshen (Ind.) College, March 27-29. Speeches include "Agreeable Disagreement" and "Good News for Everybody." More information available from 219 535-7000.

"Sing a Joyful Noise," Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., March 29-31. Weekend of congregational singing and listening to music by the Reunion Vocal Band, Randy Zwally, and others. More information available from 412 423-2056.

Michiana MEDA meeting, Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., April 13. J. B. Shenk will speak about the Lancaster Assets program. More information and reservations from 219 537-4334.

Pilots' retreat, Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa., April 19-21. Ian Scott, former commercial pilot and storyteller, will speak. Ample tie-downs available at nearby Mount Pocono Airport. Reservations available from 717 595-7505.

Making life a little more readable. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—Glen Smith (right), representative of a computer software company, introduces Melesse A. Demissie to the new "Open Book Reading System," a computer workstation recently purchased by Eastern Mennonite University. Demissie, a seminary student from Ethiopia, is visually impaired. Joyce Hedrick, co-director of the Learning Center, said the system will give the visually impaired or anyone with a learning disability immediate access to printed materials that build on their strengths in comprehension. The program scans printed material, converts it electronically to a text document, and then "speaks" the text through a life-like voice synthesizer. It also includes a feature that guides the user through text on the screen by highlighting and speaking the words simultaneously. "This feature should especially help persons with attention deficit disorders," says Hedrick. "Because the text is simultaneously displayed, highlighted in color, and spoken, it helps the student to stay focused on the task at hand."

"Let All Within Us Praise!" a symposium on worship, Bethel (Kan.) College, May 2-4. Keynote speakers are Paul Westermeyer, Kenneth Nafziger, Marlene Kropf, Keith Harder, and Patricia Shelly. Worship and workshop experiences will examine problems and possibilities of worship planning. Information and registration available from 316 284-5281.

Appreciation dinner to honor J. Lester Brubaker, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, May 4. Sponsored by Lancaster Area Council of Mennonite Schools. More information from Janet Ruhl at 717 293-5246.

North Fork, Calif., CPS Camp #35 reunion, Bloomington, Ill., Sept. 18-20. More information available from Delmar Augsburger, 815 945-7470.

• **New books:**

The 10 Commandments and Christian Community by Jay Marshall focuses on the privileges and responsibilities of the church in response to the Ten Commandments. Appropriate for small-group or Sunday school discussions. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

• **Job openings:**

Director, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. peace and justice ministries, Akron, Pa. Three-year position available July 1996. Qualifications include bachelor's degree, management and communication skills, and capacity for biblical and theological reflection on peace and justice issues from an Anabaptist perspective. Some travel required. Applications due May 13. Contact Dwight McFadden, 717 859-1151.

Fraternal adviser, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Kidron, Ohio, region. Responsibilities include assisting congregations in accessing MMA services. Qualifications include communication, organizational, and management skills, understanding of local church structures, and willingness to travel. Send résumé to Human Resources Department, MMA, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.

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NEW MEMBERS

Bossler, Elizabethtown, Pa.: Jared Garber, Zachary Garber, Rachel Lafleur, Krista Lehman, and Justin Sauder.

Erisman, Manheim, Pa.: Gabriela Rhoads.

Exeland, Wis.: Brandon Martin and Arnold Hause.

Friendship, Bedford Heights, Ohio: Harvey Osmann.

Hesston, Kan.: Tara Chisum, Steve Swartzendruber, Loren Groff, Christy Brenneman, Roy and Katie Hartzler, and Jay and Melissa Unruh.

Locust Grove, Belleville, Pa.: Sheldon Sharp.

North Lima, Ohio: Tom Panek and Ginger Panek.

Whitestone, Hesston, Kan.: Kathryn Voth.

Zion, York, Pa.: Stephanie Buchar and Edwin Stabler.

BIRTHS

Behnish, Lorri Martin and Richard, Bayfield, Ont., Kendall Frances (second child), Feb. 20.

Bergey, Gloria Knechel and Lowell, Hatfield, Pa., Natasha Lynae (second child), Feb. 25.

Bontrager, Jane and Dennis, Goshen, Ind., Molly Janelle (second child), Feb. 27.

Elliott, Char Gingerich and Dan, Crediton, Ont., Michaela (fourth child), Feb. 11.

Gascho, Valerie Melch and Dewayne, Grand Island, Neb., Kyle Lee (first child), Feb. 28.

Hoover, Eileen Keller and Gerald, Lititz, Pa., Zachary Ryan (second child), Feb. 17.

Hostetter, Miriam Keeler and David, Harrisonburg, Va., Breanna Joy (first child), Feb. 17.

Love, Anne Reed and Clayton Ted, New Paris, Ind., Calvin Benjamin (second child), Feb. 29.

Miller, Robin Christianson and Kim, Oakland, Calif., (twins) Katelyn Christianson and Alexandra Christianson (first and second children), Feb. 28.

Stoltzfus, Karen Kauffman and Kirt, Alto, Mich., Kaleb Christian (second child), Feb. 25.

Stover, Wendy Amspacher and Terry, York, Pa., Natasha (first child), Jan. 30.

MARRIAGES

Hess-Steffen: Rita Hess, Lancaster, Pa. (River Corner), and Anthony Steffen, Apple Creek, Ohio (Sonnenberg), March 9, by Bob Metzler.

DEATHS

Allebach, Mamie Yothers, 86, Souderton, Pa. Born: April 7, 1909, Dublin, Pa., to Abram K. and Anna Rice Yothers. Died: Feb. 27, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—children: Mary Alderfer, Merrill, Joseph, David; brothers and sisters: Henry and Warren Yothers, Bessie Landes, Anna Yoder, Naomi Morton, Elsie Moyer, Ruth Moyer, Florence Hunsberger, Marion Zischang; 11 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Joseph F. Allebach (husband), Darvin (son), and Ruth (daughter). Funeral: March 4, Souderton Mennonite Homes, by Mike Derstine. Burial: Rockhill Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Clemmer, Hannah S. Shoemaker, 92, Souderton, Pa. Born: Dec. 22, 1903, Elroy, Pa., to Abram A. and Mary A. Nice Shoemaker. Died: March 5, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—children: Betty Kropf, Merrill S., Vernon S., Arlan S.; 11 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Linford H. Clemmer (husband). Funeral: Souderton Mennonite Homes, by Gerald A. Clemmer and Russell B. Musselman. Burial: Souderton Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Dawson, Mary Catharine Hoover, 83, Ontario. Born: Sept. 1, 1912, Selkirk, Ont., to Erwin E. and Phoebe Hallman Hoover. Died: Feb. 10, 1996, Burlington, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—children: Jack, Jim, Mary Kinsey, David, Harold, Margaret Hoover, Lexie McDonald, Ken, Donald; sisters: Vernice Hoover, Barbara Staueffer Fretz; 9 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Arthur F. Dawson (husband). Funeral and burial: Feb. 13, Rainham Mennonite Church, by Rod Weber, Cyril Gingerich, and Doug Hallman.

Erb, Leroy, 75, Bayfield, Ont. Born: May 2, 1920, Stanley Twp., Ont., to Aaron and Veronica Gerber Erb. Died: Jan. 28, 1996, London, Ont.

'I've got peace like a river . . .' *Goshen, Ind.*—Goshen College students Chris Cummings (on guitar) and Kyle Schlabach (right) sing songs about peace with West Goshen Elementary School students who toured the Peace Factory exhibit. The interactive peace education display made its first stop on a nationwide tour at Goshen, after making its debut at Wichita '95. The stop at Goshen was sponsored by the Goshen College education department and the peace ministries center of College Mennonite Church.—*Paul Hershberger*

Survivors—wife: Laura Esther Gascho Erb; sons: Mervyn, Arnold; brother: Harold; 3 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Blake Mennonite Church. Funeral: Feb. 1, Zurich Mennonite Church, by Philip Bender and Ephraim Gingerich.

Fretz, Clarence Y., 85, Hagerstown, Md. Born: Feb. 3, 1911, Bucks County, Pa., to William D. and Hannah Yoder Fretz. Died: Feb. 22, 1996, Hagerstown, Md. Survivors—wife: Lela I. Eshleman Fretz; children: Lois Keener, Rachel, Paul C., Esther; sister: Grace; 6 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Feb. 26, Reiffs Mennonite Church, by David Thomas, Reuben Martin, Darrel Martin, and Samuel Martin.

Gingerich, Earl, 82, Zurich, Ont. Born: Feb. 1, 1913, Zurich, Ont., to Solomon and Emma Kennel Gingerich. Died: Jan. 30, 1996, Sarasota, Fla. Survivors—wife: Malinda Steckle Gingerich; daughter: Erlene Stewart; brothers and sisters: Alvin, Neil, Lennis, Elda Bender, Doreen Oesch, Della Mae Gascho, Dorothy Bowman, Helen Gingerich; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3, Zurich Mennonite Church, by Philip and Julie Bender.

Imhoff, Glenwood L., 88, Eureka, Ill. Born: Nov. 7, 1907, Washington, Ill., to Jacob and Katherine Schertz Imhoff. Died: March 2, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivors—daughter: Kathy Zehr; 4 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren, 2 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Laura M. Gingerich Imhoff (wife) and three daughters. Funeral: March 5, Metamora Mennonite Church, by Robert Nolt. Burial: Hickory Point Cemetery.

Price, Mary Longacher, 86, Newport News, Va. Born: March 18, 1909, Littles, Ind., to William S. and Mary Witmer Longacher. Died: Jan. 18, 1996, Newport News, Va. Predeceased by: Barney B. Price (husband). Funeral and burial: Jan. 20, Warwick River Mennonite Church, by Gordon Zook.

Rohrer, Willis W., 81, Smoketown, Pa. Born: March 21, 1914, Smoketown, Pa., to Peter L. and Bertha Wenger Rohrer. Died: Feb. 27, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—wife: Clara Groff Rohrer; children: Gerald C., Gordon D., Dianne K. Dulio; brothers and sisters: Clarence W., Peter L., Earl W., Mary E.; 4 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Grace Kindig Rohrer (first wife). Funeral and burial: Feb. 29, Willow Street Mennonite Church, by Robert A. Breneman and J. Marvin Shenk.

Schrock, Ruth E. Petersheim, 62, Hollsopple, Pa. Born: Aug. 6, 1933, Lancaster, Pa. Died: Feb. 27, 1996, Hollsopple, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Homer E. Schrock; children: Orpha Millslagle, Linda Beitzel, Darrel, Teresa; sisters: Esther Petersheim, Naomi Lapp; step-brothers and sisters: Jonathan and Melvin Stoltzfus, Lavina Miller, Rebecca Stoltzfus; 7 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: March 1, Thomas Mennonite Church, by Harold A. Shenk and Dan Hertzler.

Shantz, Irvin, 94, St. Jacobs, Ont. Born: May 25, 1902, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Norman and Emma Rosenberger Shantz. Died: Feb. 20, 1996, St. Jacobs, Ont., of a heart attack. Survivors—sons: Milo, Ross; sisters: Edith Nahrgang, Reta Gingerich; 7 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lavina Roth (wife). Funeral and burial: Feb. 24, Nith Valley Mennonite Church, by Harold Schilk.

Snyder, Lucille Geraldine, 82, Iowa City, Iowa. Born: June 6, 1913, Kalona, Iowa, to William H. and Clara Bender Snyder. Died: Feb. 21, 1996, Iowa City, Iowa. Survivors—brothers and sisters: William, Jr., John, Delbert, Ruby Greazel, Magdalena Boudreaux, Nellie Vitosh. Congregational membership: First Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: Feb. 24, East Union Mennonite Church, by Firman Gingerich and Diane Zaerr.

Steckle, Asa, 77, Zurich, Ont. Born: Nov. 29, 1918, Stanley Twp., Ont., to Menno D. and Elizabeth Shantz Steckle. Died: Feb. 15, 1996, Hensall, Ont. Survivors—wife: Lillian Margaret McDowell Steckle; children: Gerald, Doris Sinasac, Philip, Arnold, Evelyn Vincent, Rhoda Sinasac, Sim; brother and sisters: Oliver, Hannah Smith, Celinda Martin; 16 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17, Zurich Mennonite Church, by Philip Bender.

Stutzman, Glen E., 78, Rogers, Neb. Born: Oct. 28, 1917, Strang, Neb., to Leander and Lydia Wittrig Stutzman. Died: March 4, 1996, Rogers, Neb., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—children: Jerry, Lani, John, Doug, Shelly Hanly; brothers and sisters: Harry, Louis, John, Ed, Evelyn Bellar, Anna Mae Oswald; 14 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Catherine May Sage Stutzman (wife) and Sterling (son). Congregational membership; Beemer Mennonite Church. Funeral: March 7, Schuyler, Neb., by Roger Hazen. Burial: Schuyler Cemetery.

Yoder, Emma Luella, 82, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Feb. 11, 1914, Kalona, Iowa, to Steven D. and Elizabeth Miller Yoder. Died: Feb. 23, 1996, Kalona, Iowa, of cancer. Survivors—daughter: Delores Spitzer; sisters: Fannie Strickland, Lydia Myers; 4 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, 2 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 27, Kalona Menonite Church, by David Groh, Scott Swartzendruber, and Mick Murray. Burial: East Union Cemetery.

Yoder, Lidia Ann Slaubaugh, 89, Rolette, N.D. Born: Dec. 22, 1906, Nappanee, Ind., to Tobias J. and Amanda Yoder Slaubaugh. Survivors—children: Paul, Mary, Edna Graber, Irene Sjong; brothers: Levi, Dan, Raymond; 8 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jerry Yoder (husband). Funeral and burial: Jan. 19, Lakeview Mennonite Church, by Brian S. Price.

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THE LAST WORD

Wailing with Luo women and Jesus

As a young teenager in Shirati, Tanzania, I remember lying in bed on warm nights and listening to the shrill tongue rolls of the women in a nearby village. Women of the Luo tribe—as well as women of other tribes—often wail through the night at the funerals of family members. The sound tears at the darkness and reminds all who hear that someone has died—and that their relatives aren't going to let them leave this world without everyone in earshot taking notice.

Most striking about those wails of Luo women is the refusal to intellectualize death. There are no flimsy answers in such cries—no easy truisms about accepting God's will or learning from the pain. In the wails there are only horror, desperation, and ache.

We often rush to make sense of our tragedies, but so many just won't be made sense of—the abduction of Alicia Showalter Reynolds on an early March Saturday morning in Culpeper, Va.; the bombings in Jerusalem and London; the slow dying of starving people around the globe.

A time may come for acceptance of tragedy as a part of life and for resting in the higher logic of God. But first must come the wailing and the angry tears of not understanding and not even pretending to understand why bad things happen.

The verse "Jesus wept" (John 11:35) often loses meaning because of its fame as the shortest verse in the Bible and its ease of memorization for kids racking up Bible memory points in Sunday school. And considering that Jesus probably knows the happy ending of the story before he cries those historic tears, it can be easy to dismiss the account as irrelevant to our grief. Sure, Jesus weeps after the death of his friend, but then he says in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" and the dead man walks out of the tomb. Once again Jesus uses that messianic power that we want so badly but don't often identify—the power to bring people back to us.

If only we had such power. Our cries hardly ever keep our dying ones alive or bring our missing ones home. Right now thousands of people cry loudly along with the Showalter and Reynolds families and friends, "God! Bring Alicia home!" We stand at the tombs of those killed in Jerusalem, Rwanda, England, and Bosnia, shouting at the tops of our lungs, "It can't be true! Come back!" We cry until our voices are hoarse at the graves of our parents, children, siblings, friends —and none of our Lazaruses return.

But the story is more difficult to dismiss when we read what actually makes Jesus weep after Lazarus' death. Jesus starts to cry after he talks to Lazarus' sister Mary—after she bitterly reprimands him; "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus sees her crying, and the Jews along with her, and he is "greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved" (John 11:33).

Yes, Jesus knows the end of the story—that Lazarus lives. But he also realizes that Mary doesn't know it. He knows that all she feels is the emptiness of the chair where Lazarus used to sit, the silence in conversation that Lazarus used to pack with his stories, and that circle of space between her arms that her brother used to fill when they embraced.

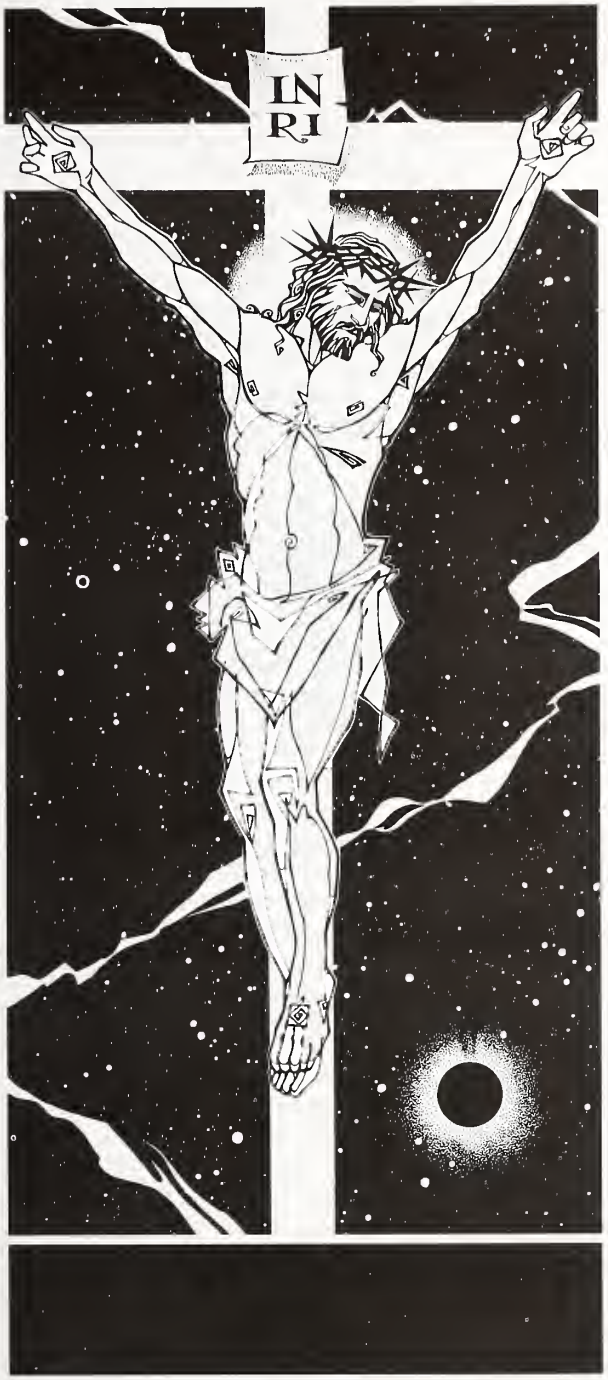
And Jesus weeps because he has this uncanny way of being human and divine at the same time; in this case, that means knowing the end of the story and still being able to identify with those who don't.

Maybe Jesus weeps also because he knows the imminence of his own death, and that all the glory of the coming resurrection doesn't erase the horror he must first endure.

Easter and the heaven it points us toward don't remove the unexplainable and almost unendurable tragedies we experience today. Our grieving and wailing will last far, far longer than the nights of a Luo funeral or the forty days of Lent. We can't rush the resurrection, and we can't bring back our absent ones.

Jesus' healing may on occasion come in time (unlike in the Lazarus story in which he shows up "too late" and then hears all about it from Mary and the Jews). Probably more often, however, wars will happen, children will be killed on city streets, and our loved ones will die or disappear.

At these times we'll cry until the tears don't come and wail until our voices are only whispers. At these times Jesus will cry when we can't anymore.—*vsw*



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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Why do we call this Friday 'good'?

If the disciples who listened to Jesus every day for three years would deny, betray, and abandon him, what makes us think we would have done otherwise?

by Arthur Paul Boers

Any way you look at it, there's so little to admire or even to consider good about Good Friday. Most of the people involved in the Gospel accounts of the events of this day are not admirable. They are despicable. It is not bad enough that the political and religious leaders crucify Jesus or that the crowd becomes a mob and turns on him. But one of Jesus' own disciples denies him, and another betrays him. Yet in truth most of the disciples effectively deny and betray Jesus in their fearful abandonment.

The Good Friday story is deliberately structured to remind us that we are all sinners. It shows us that on our own, even when we try to do our best, sooner or later we mess up. If left to ourselves, we are lost, and our brokenness swallows all our attempts to be faithful and good.

William Willimon says: "The cross, for us, gathers up compassion and judgment." Now that judgment characteristic is easy to spot. In the Good Friday story, not one of us can point a finger at anyone; we are all implicated. The only innocent here is Jesus, and the rest of us

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Ed Robbins:
The cross is the fullest extension of choice God gives to humanity 6

Philip L. Kniss:
Easter Sunday ought to push us into action 8

Mennonite Church North America:
Integration Committee recommends new name 9

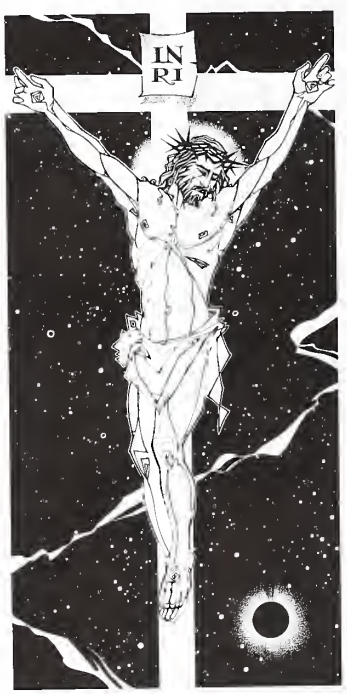
K'ekchi' leaders visit U.S. 12

It is not the events of this day that make it good. Nor the people who acted in these events. We call this Friday 'good' because the name of Jesus lives on and on.

stand judged. For just as all conspired toward, collaborated with, or contributed to the crucifixion of Jesus, we know that there are no innocents among us today. We are all guilty of conspiracy, collaboration, and contribution. We are all guilty of aiding and abetting in the crucifixion of the Son of God, whether intentionally or not.

But, you think, "Not me! I would never do such a thing!" Like Peter, we believe only others could. But the Gospel accounts are harsher and more realistic. If the disciples who listened to Jesus every day for three years, the ones who knew him most intimately would deny, betray, and abandon Jesus, what makes us think we would do otherwise?

William Stringfellow reminds us, "The gospels are redundant in verifying the reality—one might also say, the versatility—of the skepticism of the disciples about Jesus Christ as Lord. The disciples show a similar misunderstanding of Christ's kingdom when the assorted claims and disputes among them concerning honor and status surface, as when they argue [over] which of them is the greatest . . . or as when the sons of Zebedee, James and John, seek the places beside Jesus in glory. . . . Their hearing does not seem to be clarified during Holy Week, though Jesus' utterances are then no longer guarded. . . . Throughout their whole experience with Jesus, in Holy Week as well as earlier, the disciples are found misconstruing his authority, or doubting it, or, sometimes, opposing it."



Without exaggeration, Stringfellow labels the disciples obtuse, apprehensive, hysterical, and skeptical. And we are no different. That is the strange message of Good Friday—the judgment of this day.

We object to this judgment because we did not plant that traitor's kiss on Jesus' cheek, hammer nails into his hand, or even fall asleep in the garden. But most of us have betrayed someone who trusted us, hurt or abused someone who was vulnerable, neglected to show mercy, and failed to give love.

There is judgment here aplenty in this day we strangely label "Good" Friday. But mercy and compassion ultimately triumph. And herein, strangely, we find the reason that this day is called "good." It's because we are not left alone. Jesus walks and works with us.

Jesus takes on our worst: our sins, brokenness, betrayals, and denials. Jesus bears them to the cross and carries them to death. And somehow Jesus redeems us. Through his suffering, death, and resurrection, Jesus rewrites history and turns around the course of the world, reconciling us to God and to each other. Even our worst, the slaying of God's chosen, is turned to God's best—the saving of humanity.

Thus even on this the worst of all days we can trust that God is at work, and nothing will separate us from God's love. Paul proclaims in Romans 8: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Gerrit Scott Dawson writes, "God took on the responsibility of caring for the pain of the world by entering it in Jesus. Rather than turn away in exasperation to leave us in the chaos we created, God waded right into [our] mess. Jesus was not insulated from the people around him; he walked among us, he was vulnerable. . . . It is as if [Jesus] said, 'I go before you. I will undergo all you suffer and have experienced. None of your life will be foreign to me. You will know always that wherever you have been, I have been also.' "

The goodness we attribute to Good Friday is not goodness because of the events that happened or because of people who behaved so well. It is because the name of Jesus Christ lives on. His name, his word, and his life continue. Here is the reason we call this day "good."

Arthur Paul Boers is pastor of Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and he has given us light. . . . You are my God, and I will give thanks to you."—Ps. 118:26-28a

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READERS SAY

Our Father-Mother Who Art in Heaven (Oct. 3). Jesus never taught the disciples to pray to Father-Mother. We should pray as Jesus taught us and showed us by his example—to our heavenly Father only. Otherwise it is sin.

Fannie Stutzman
Massillon, Ohio

In her letter ("Readers Say," Jan. 23), Ruth S. Weaver makes an astute observation about a college administration turning to the criminal justice system instead of utilizing our Mennonite peace theology for resolving conflict. One week later (Jan. 30), you ask in your editorial, ***The Mennonite College and Its Constituency,*** "Why is the church so critical about what happens on campus?"

People encourage and support their children to go to Mennonite schools because they believe these schools will be true to their mission statements. They believe that Mennonite schools will nurture their young people into the mature Christian adults that God wants and our world so desperately needs.

But when a Mennonite college chooses to follow the way of the world, thereby hurting the young adults entrusted to them, it is the home church and community who are left to pick up the pieces. When the church sees its trust betrayed, can it continue to recommend and support church college attendance? Should it?

Marjorie A. Gehman
Telford, Pa.

In ***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** (Jan. 23), J. Denny Weaver is on target in identifying discipleship, community, and the rejection of violence as not merely add-ons to orthodox Christianity for Mennonites but commitments that are important for truly knowing Jesus Christ.

But is Weaver staking out ground in the realm of ideas and ideology to be defended? Or do our convictions grow out of our relationship to the risen Christ?

Perhaps the distinction between the realm of ideas and knowing Jesus by relationship is somewhat artificial. But it is important for us to realize that our task is not to defend and convince others of the rightness of our ideas. It is to be faithful to the person to whom these commitments to community, discipleship, and peace are meant to witness.

For me, the tension comes in relation to people in whom I see evidence of a relationship to the same Jesus I know but who do not share my convictions about the rejection of violence. In recognizing that they too know Jesus, I am no less convinced that I am right. So I trust Jesus will continue to teach the ones who follow him in life; on the day when we all beat our swords into plowshares, if not sooner, all Christians will be pacifists.

I wonder too if what threatens to make Mennonites "merely one more North American denomination that accommodates violence" is really the loss of "ethnic glue," as Weaver suggests. Our convictions are not sustained, I believe, so much by theological distinctiveness as they are by our living as a community of people who are vulnerable in our witness to Jesus. By becoming less a people "on the edge," peace has become too much an ideological commitment and less a conviction we live by.

Craig Snider
North Port, Fla.

What Does Headship Really Mean? (Feb. 6). I question whether the Bible teaches mutual submission for everyone. The word itself is a contradiction in terms. If a worker is submissive to a boss and says, "We'll do it your way," and the boss responds, "No, we'll do it your way," the result is an untenable situation.

The idea of mutual submission is based on a fractured sentence in the Bible. Eph. 5:21-22 in the modern Greek texts states, "Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ, wives to your own husbands in the Lord." The word submission is referring specifically to women. The second use of the word in verse 22 in some texts appears to be a later addition and does not fit in with the author's style here.

Trying to make headship mean source seems like strained exegesis. In going back to Gen. 2 to make man the source of woman, the Scripture manipulators run into another obstacle: Gen. 2 says the woman is to be a helper—not at all what they want.

Today Mennonite organizations are

(continued on page 5)

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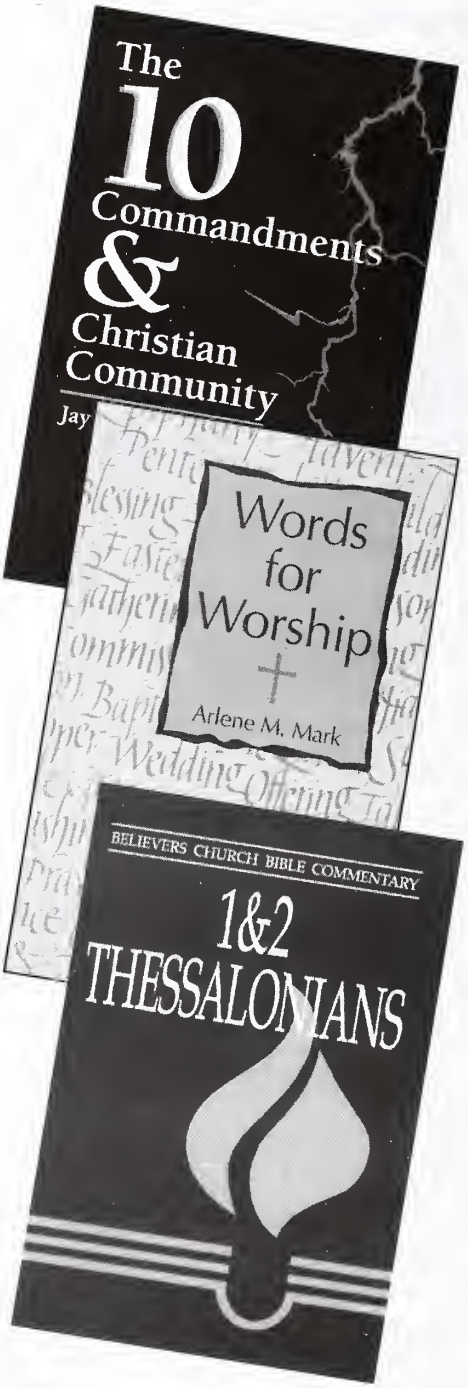

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(continued from page 3)

encouraging women and minorities to apply for positions. However, one minority group will get scant consideration. It is the group that believes the Bible and its doctrines the way Anabaptists have believed them for hundreds of years—without having to resort to esoteric explanations to make it conform to their prejudices.

Samuel B. Nafziger
Buffalo Head Prairie, Alta.

Promise Keepers: a Movement of Hope—and a Wellspring of Debate (Feb. 6). Although I cannot personally either endorse or criticize Promise Keepers, I am concerned that we evaluate what we buy into. In this day of much religious rhetoric and attractive packaging, it behooves us to look deeper, well beyond the obvious. I am reminded frequently of those biblical words, "a form of godliness."

As I understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, I see it as one of hope. Hope is most needed where hopelessness exists. Hopelessness exists most often where resources are absent or controlled. Hopelessness exists most often with the powerless, the "least of these" Jesus talks about in Matthew.

Yes, the form may be there, the rhetoric may be right, the packaging may be attractive. But if it does not bring hope to the hopeless and dignity to those lacking dignity, then I believe the eternal value is lost.

Rose Marie Shetler
Goshen, Ind.

We appreciate the wisdom expressed in the editorial, ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12). How much better to *wait* until we have a clear word from God than to rush to decisions that cause pain and division! It seems to us that the wisdom expressed in this editorial is much like the wise counsel of Gamaliel in Acts 5:34ff.

Why is it that so often persons who have never experienced the reality of homosexuality are considered "authorities" on the subject? Why are we so fearful to hear the stories of parents of gays and lesbians or of homosexual persons themselves? Like Martin W. Lehman ("Readers Say," Mar. 12), we too would like to hear in *Gospel Herald* from Mennonite scholars, parents of homosexuals, believing homosexuals, and supporting congregations.

When the Jewish authorities wanted to condemn Jesus, Nicodemus challenged them: "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?" (John 7:51). To pass judgment without even allowing those on trial to tell their stories seems unjust and not at all in keeping with the example of Jesus.

Roberta Showalter Kreider
Harold G. Kreider
Sellersville, Pa.

I believe the Spirit is speaking to the church through the wise counsel of your editorial, ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12).

When the church is genuinely seeking to discern God's will and has not heard a unifying word, the time has not yet come for action on an issue. Instead, we must wait in humility, continue to pray and search God's Word, listen to each other, and trust the Lord of the church to lead us and protect from harm.

Marlene Kropf
Elkhart, Ind.

I value your editorial on cooling what could be a long hot summer. Your words on slowing down and not making decisions out of anger and fear are needed. May we in the church hear them.

You might want to be aware, though, that two things you said make it harder for some of us to hear your message: "wait."

1. In an aside, you say that "many of us don't" agree on what the Bible says. I'm not so sure it is responsible to say that anymore—though it was only a few years ago. Tim Stafford (one with his ear to the ground) says that a consensus is forming. In a context of asking about what the Bible says, he writes that "a degree of clarity has emerged after much vexed exegesis." This is "that the biblical injunctions clearly apply to homosexuality as it is practiced today and not only to its forms in the ancient world."

2. You mention that "the church has changed its interpretations of the Bible and its positions before." But all the instances of change which you list are different from a change in our position regarding homosexuality. There were Bible passages leading us to make those other changes you listed, but there are no passages teaching that committed homosexual relationships can be holy.

I pray that all of us, even so, catch what you say about anger and strident voices. May God give you energy and strength and hope for your task of helping our church hear each other.

Harold N. Miller
Corning, N.Y.

Your editorial, ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12), is as close to a perfect response as there could be to the controversy over homosexuality. In this heated climate, too many people are set to do irreparable harm. You're right—let's *wait.*

Thank you for your courage and thoughtfulness. You have done your church a great service.

Carl E. Martin
Littleton, Col.

Far be it from me to tell you what to print in *Gospel Herald.* But let me please ask for more up-to-date data concerning how Islam is now sweeping our nation. Perhaps you could challenge pastors to warn us of the very real potential of Matt. 24:24 or Rev. 13.

Clarence D. Overholt
West Liberty, Ohio

Pontius' Puddle

The cross is the fullest extension of choice God gives to humanity

There are no benches at the cross to allow us to straddle the two spiritual worlds. Rather, the cross rises up and confronts us, demanding that we choose.

by Ed Robbins

"On a hill far away, stood an old rugged cross; the emblem of suffering and shame. . . . "

In his book *On a Hill Too Far Away,* John Fischer tells of a church in Massachusetts with an unusual feature. Solidly planted in the middle of the floor, right up in front of the church, stands a ten-foot-high cross. It is made of raw, unfinished wood, and closer examination shows it to be full of splinters and rough spots. In sum, this cross is a very good likeness to the one used for Jesus on Calvary.

Neither decorative nor attractive, this cross stands in the midst of the assembly as a visible reminder of the centrality of the cross in every Christian's life. Upfront, it says that Christianity is not built on teaching, preaching, or good works. Our faith and walk is ultimately built upon a cross and what was done on that cross nearly 2,000 years ago.

The Gospel accounts differ from each other in small details but not on the essentials of that fateful day in Jerusalem long ago. These accounts help us imagine ourselves on a hill overlooking one of the gates of the city as a sad procession wends its way toward us. The hill is called Golgotha, "the place of the skull," and it is the site of criminal executions.

Three men toil up the slope in the warm morning sun, dragging the long beam of their crosses with them. Crosses had for centuries been the favorite execution tool of the Romans. They were sturdy, could be used for years, and never had to be cleaned. The victims took long enough in dying and in suffering to satisfy the demands of the law. Best of all, the crucified served as grim reminders to would-be criminals, for they could live as long as two or three days.

At length the procession reaches the top, and one carrier is dismissed; evidently one of the condemned was too weak to finish carrying his crosspiece there. The rest passes quickly: the crosspieces fastened together, the condemned laid out and held down firmly while nails are driven through the palms and a spike through the crossed ankles. Then one by one the crosses are hoisted and dropped into their holes. All the soldiers have to do now is crowd control, keeping the families back a fair distance while allowing those who get their thrills from jeering at dying men enough room for their sport.

The curses, wails, screams, and gibes slowly ebb until all that is heard is the faint sobbing of women, occasional words from the weakest one to people who have followed him there, and finally the slow drip of blood from the nailholes into the Judean dust.

No, the cross is not a thing of beauty at all. There is no "dogwood legend" stuff here, nothing sanitary or even particularly sacred—at least not at the time. Later the cross became a sacred symbol, but at first it was the reminder of a painful sacrificial death.

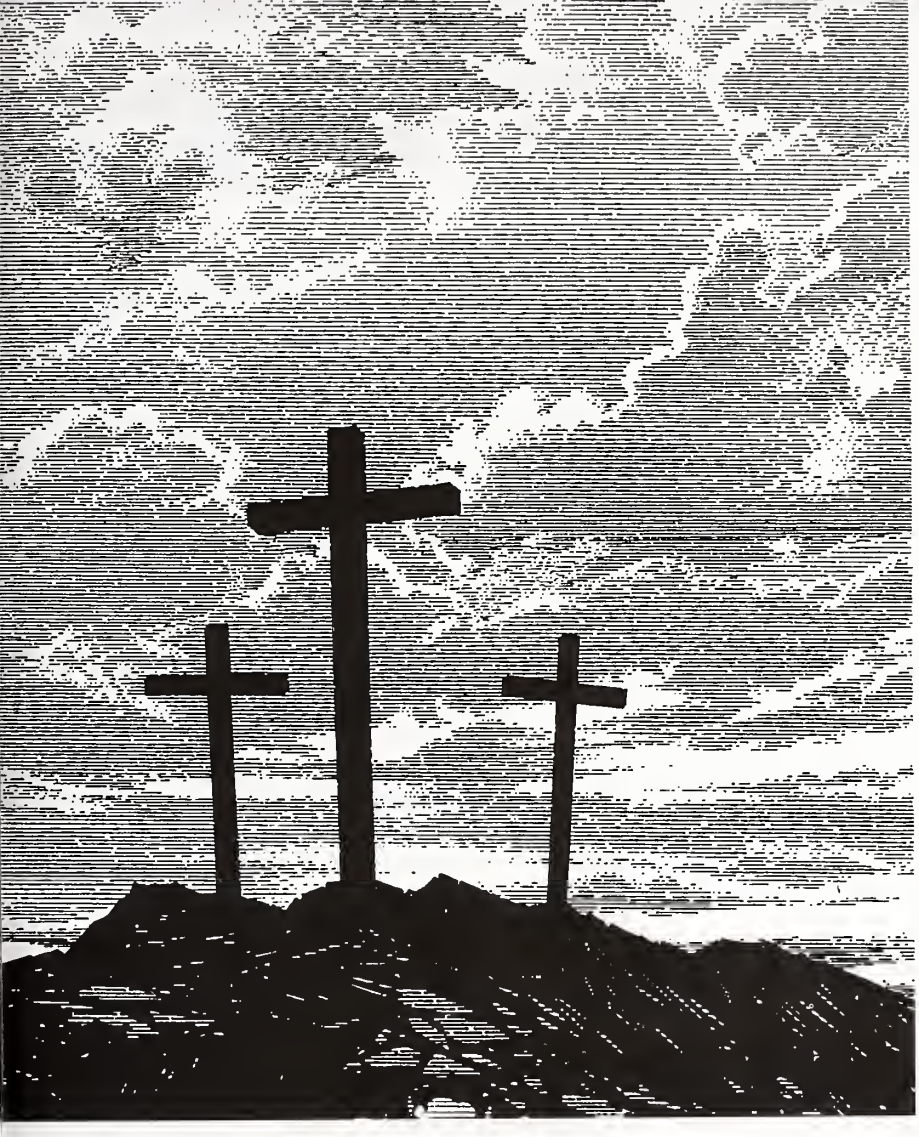
So what does the cross mean for us in 1996? We no longer execute criminals in this manner; we have progressed to the electric chair or lethal injection. The cross no longer bears the stigma of being associated with someone condemned. Like the stocks and the ducking-stool, the cross is no longer a place of public humiliation. For us the cross holds no adverse meaning at all but rather shows up on necklaces, pendants, earrings, and coat pins.

Because it is everywhere, the cross is nowhere. It has lost its meaning. So what is this object about which we sing in such hymns as "The Old Rugged Cross"? And what should it mean for us today?

The cross reminds us of Christ's death for our sins. A number of years ago Karl Menninger wrote a book entitled, *Whatever Happened to Sin?* I have so often preached on the love of God that I have failed to also remind my hearers of the equally important justice of God.

Jesus did not live and die for no purpose. Calvary was not permitted in the plan of God simply to provide a spectacular exit for Jesus from the human scene. Jesus specifically and willingly chose to die on the cross for our sins and the sins of generations past and yet to come.

A holy God had declared humanity guilty of sin, a decision thoroughly in keeping with his justice. But his love would not permit us to die alone and lost in our sins. He sent his unique son to be our sin-bearer, and his death accomplished our forgiveness.



The cross is not a thing of beauty. It is a reminder of a painful, sacrificial death.

In the *Star Trek* movie, Spock gives his life to save the Enterprise from exploding by saying, "The need of the many outweighs the need of the one." That line summarizes God's viewpoint—the need of humanity to be forgiven of sin outweighs the need for the Son to stay in heaven.

The cross marks the great divide of life. As a boy in grade school, I vividly recall learning about a place in the Rocky Mountains called the Continental Divide. From that point all the water from one side flows eastward, toward the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean, and all the water on the other side flows westward to the Pacific Ocean. There is no centerpoint; the pull of gravity toward one way side or the other determines a raindrop's ultimate destination.

Similarly, the cross of Calvary is the soul's great divide. There are no benches at the cross where we may straddle the two spiritual worlds. Rather, the cross rises up and confronts us, demanding that we make a choice as to which side we will stand. If we choose the side of doubt and unbelief, the remainder of life flows downward into sin, death, and destruction. On the side of faith and belief, all of life flows upward toward Jesus and eternal life.

Today God places this rough-hewn, blood-stained symbol of death and hope before us and demands that we make a choice. All men and women come ultimately to this place of decision. This choice is found throughout the Scriptures. Joshua tells the Israelites, "Choose today who you will serve; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." In his last speech, Moses urges Israel, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curses. Now therefore choose life. . . . "

The cross is the concrete expression, the final and fullest extension of choice by God toward humanity. He places it before us and commands us to choose.

Ed Robbins is pastor of Watertown (N.Y.) Mennonite Church. He is the husband of Debbie and father of two daughters, Deanna and Kayla.

Easter Sunday ought to push us into action

by Philip L. Kniss

I hold in my hands a small, brown, fuzzy object. By even the most optimistic assessment, this little thing is ugly. It has no discernible shape. It is dry, hard, and dirty. If it ever did have life, it certainly looks dead now.

But come springtime, a miracle happens. When the soil starts warming, this bulb wakes up. It comes to life. Within a matter of days, it sends out stalks that are longer and larger than the bulb itself. Within weeks it produces flowers of exquisite beauty. All this from an ugly bulb.

This is a mystery to me—I simply do not understand it. Nobody else really does either.

Sure, biologists have figured out that certain conditions cause cells to divide and multiply, then the cells begin to differentiate, and eventually they start taking the shape of a visible living organism. But the biologists don't really know what makes it all happen that way. They haven't figured out the life-giving force behind all this growth and beauty. The transformation from bulb to flower is ultimately a mystery.

But then again, I don't spend much time wishing I *did* understand this mystery.

I don't understand the mystery of Jesus' resurrection either. It's not at all clear to me what kind of form Jesus had after he returned to life—or exactly how this happened. There are some folks, I'm sure, who would love to explain it to me in detail. They have invested a lot of energy into figuring it out. But despite the archaeological surveys in the tombs around Jerusalem, the scientific analyses of the Shroud of Turin, and the endless theories proposed by people who try to scientifically prove the truth of the Bible, I still say that the resurrection is a mystery.

But then again, I don't spend very much time sitting around wishing I *did* understand it.

If I fully understood the mystery of blooming bulbs, the bursting forth of lilies in the spring probably wouldn't mean as much to me. And if I fully understood the mystery of the resurrection of Jesus, Easter maybe wouldn't move me as much as it does now. It would be a sad day if Easter lost its wonder.

The resurrection is not something to figure out; the resurrection is something to wonder about. It is not to analyze but to marvel at. It is not to study but to ponder.

The church in Corinth asked the apostle Paul some questions about the resurrection. Some people in the church—maybe many of them—had serious problems accepting this whole thing about Jesus rising from the dead, much less the idea that someday they too would rise. Any kind of personal life after death wasn't part of their worldview.

Paul presented a powerful argument, though we're not sure whether he succeeded in convincing these skeptics. After making his case as thoroughly and carefully as possible, Paul admitted that it was still a mystery. "Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed . . . and the dead will be raised imperishable" (1 Cor. 15:51-52). Even Paul didn't attempt to resolve the mystery of resurrection.

So we are left with some questions. Questions are fine—even questions about the resurrection. But not every question will take us where we need to go. We can ask questions about how this resurrection took place or about what exactly happened before and after the supposed resurrection. But these questions will not take us very far.

The real question about the resurrection is, "Where does the reality of the resurrection intersect with my daily life?"

Knowing Jesus rose from the dead ought to do something for me. The resurrection is not only truth for the head and heart but also truth for the feet. Knowing Jesus is alive ought to send me, drive me, and give my life energy and direction.

Paul understood this. He did not finish his glorious essay on resurrection in 1 Cor. 1 by saying, "Now, aren't you glad you have that all straight?" Paul knew it wasn't just a matter to get straight in our minds. It was a matter to get us moving. In the final verse of the chapter, Paul tells us what the practical outcome of this ought to be: "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Easter Sunday ought to do just that—push us into action. The Easter celebration is not over when we have sung the last stanza of the last anthem. That last stanza is our cue that it is time to get moving and to live in the light of the resurrection. It is our cue that Easter has just begun.

Philip L. Kniss is pastor at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va. This article is adapted from a sermon he preached there.

Mennonite Church North America

Integration Committee recommends name for new merged Mennonite denomination

Chicago, Ill.—Mennonite Church North America. That is the name being proposed by the Integration Committee for the new denomination to rise out of the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC).

The Integration Committee seemed surprised at how soon they came to agreement. It took less than a half hour of a 48-hour meeting held here March 23-25 to agree on a name.

The committee's recommendation goes to the general boards of both denominations for processing. Delegates to business assemblies of both groups will have the final vote.

What structures? If discussion of a name took only a half hour, structures for the new denomination took much of the rest of the time. After a worship service on Sunday morning, the committee put aside a 27-item agenda and asked each of its 11 members to give their vision for how a new denomination might be structured.

Three possible models emerged. One calls for a strong general board, which would hire staff to head program work, with oversight by reference councils. Both staff and councils would fluctuate based on the current needs.

A second model is a regional approach, in which the church's work would be coordinated out of several centers throughout North America. While their primary focus would be mission, regional centers would also take care of other work, such as congregational resources and Christian education.

Vision: Healing and Hope, adopted by both MCs and GCs at Wichita '95, is the focus for a third model. It calls for a general board, which would oversee three program councils: one each for nurture and spiritual development, community, and mission.

The committee agreed to attempt to make a decision on structure at its next meeting in October.

Throughout the discussion of structures, committee members continued to ask: Will the new denomination be an amalgamation of separate Canadian and U.S. entities, or will it be one North American organization with perhaps separate national conferences?

Taking care of country agenda. Integration Committee members agreed they favored one North American body. The question then focused on how to best take care of country agenda. While a Canadian Mennonite Conference (CMC) already exists, there is no comparable organization of Mennonite area conferences in the U.S.

Committee members from the U.S. agreed that most Mennonites south of the 49th parallel don't see the need for a separate organization. "So, crassly stated, we have a Canadian conference that doesn't want to stop operating and a U.S. conference that doesn't want to be created," said Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Bluffton, Ohio, committee cochair.

Canadian members on the committee said they were more concerned about having an equal voice in the new denomination than they were that the U.S. have a comparable structure. "We could live with that if we were assured that when there are items that relate only to the U.S., there will be a separate caucus of U.S. delegates at assemblies and during board meetings," said Mary Burkholder, Kitchener, Ont.

Settling the question. "There's a lot of scuttlebutt around on this question," said Helmut Harder, Winnipeg, Man., CMC general secretary. "But Canadian Mennonites are adamant that we have to settle this question. We still don't feel like we are colleagues around the table. But when we have to fight for that, we get a bad name."

Canadian members pointed out that in recent discussions about integrating voluntary service, no one had been present from their country. The same was true in early discussions of merging ministerial leadership offices.

MCs ask if they are merging with one group or two, several members noted. They urged GCs to clarify the question.

"I'm not buying the idea that the Canadian question is a GC problem," said Harder. "CMC is an integrated organization. Our largest conference is MCEC, which is made up more of former MCs. The Canadian question is also an MC problem."

Committee members agreed to find a consultant to help them resolve this issue as well as determine what structures the new church should have.

During the meeting the Integration Committee also fielded several questions and directives from MC program boards and GC commissions. Expressing some surprise at the speed with which integration discussions were happening, they decided to request that the general boards provide the Integration Committee with more staff time so that they can more adequately "guide and monitor the integration process," the mandate given to them by the Wichita '95 delegates.

Other decisions. The committee gave a favorable nod to the idea of creating regional mission centers throughout North America to work on both home and overseas outreach. They urged current mission agencies to continue discussions already begun about these centers.

The committee also said it favors one church publication, with country editions produced out of two editorial offices. They said they favor the editor being located in Canada and making subsidy available so that the periodical have as wide circulation as possible in the first several years of the denomination.

Throughout the meeting committee members reminded each other that integration was hard work. "What impresses me is the complexity of the agenda," said Harder. "To try to take people seriously when you can't quite find the target is a real challenge."

Lindsey Robinson, Harrisburg, Pa., likened the work to eating an elephant. "You just have to do it one bite at a time," he said.

The committee recognized Vern Preheim, Newton, Kan., for his six years of work with both the Integration Exploration Committee and the Integration Committee. This was the last meeting for Preheim, who steps down as GC general secretary in August.

—J. Lorne Peachey

Council of Commissions focuses on integration

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Integration with the Mennonite Church (MC) was the major focus of discussion at the annual Council of Commissions of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) meeting here, March 8-12.

Four divisions and the General Board considered how integration will affect each of their programs.

"It seems whenever we discuss integration, the Canadian folks express feeling left out," stated Lee Delp, Lansdale, Pa. The General Board passed a proposal that the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) be guaranteed representation on integration task forces.

A second proposal states that any integrated structures be approved by the GC and MC general boards, but that GC approval would be contingent on a "yes" vote from the CMC member of the board.

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The Division of General Services (DGS) discussed a proposal for a major fundraising campaign to "celebrate integration in the year 2000," according to Elmer Wall of Pretty Prairie, Kan. The board encouraged discussion with MC and CMC about the proposal.

Mark Vincent, director of The Giving Project, outlined a strategy for developing a theology of money for North American Mennonite churches.

The Council on Home Ministries (CHM) affirmed a proposal to look at integrating Mennonite Voluntary Service with the MC service programs. The board encouraged cooperative work in areas such as joint orientation for volunteers and joint recruitment.

The Council on Overseas Ministries (COM) discussed integration with MBM. "Last October and again in February, MBM took two major strides toward us with arms outstretched, and it's time for us to respond," said COM chairperson Tom Lehman, Chapel Hill, N.C. COM members spoke in favor of the creation of an integrated mission structure.

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While the Commission on Education (COE) gave approval to a statement supportive of integration, much of the discussion focused on dealing with last year's net loss of $180,000 by Faith & Life Press (FLP). FLP had to borrow funds from the GC General Board to cover its 1995 operating expenses.

In consultation with DGS, COE appointed a task force to deal with the financial problems of the publishing house and "to bring FLP into long-term financial viability."

Puerto Ricans bring gifts to MDS. *Reedley, Calif. (MDS)*—Julio Vincenty, Puerto Rico Mennonite Disaster Service unit leader, works on an MDS building project. Speaking at MDS all-unit meetings in February, Vincenty said that MDS volunteers from Puerto Rico brought special skills to the project at St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. "[North] Americans don't know the language of St. Thomas," said Vincenty at the meetings. "They understand the words but not the way they think." Vincenty said that patience and understanding of the local culture were the Puerto Rico unit's unique gifts to hurricane cleanup work in St. Thomas.

The Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico sent several teams to work alongside Mennonites from the United States and Canada to assist hurricane victims. It was the Puerto Rican church's first MDS experience outside of their country.

Hochstetler named dean of students at Hesston

Hesston, Kan. (HC)—Char Hochstetler of Hesston has been appointed dean of students at Hesston College, according to president Loren Swartzendruber. The board of overseers approved Hochstetler's appointment on March 11.

Char Hochstetler

Prior to her appointment as interim dean in November 1995, Hochstetler served as campus counselor. A graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, Hochstetler received a master's degree in social work at the University of Kansas. She was resident director at Goshen for two years and worked four years for the Association for the Disabled of Elkhart County, Ind.

"Her skills as counselor, experience in residence life, and the excellent job that she has done for the college over the last four and a half months were the factors that commended Hochstetler," says Swartzendruber.

"I want Hesston's student life department to continue to offer an environment that values the needs of the individual and, most importantly, a community that promotes faith in Jesus Christ," Hochstetler says.

'Giving a helping hand, not handouts'

Mennonites to help build seminary in Ghana

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—A team of North Americans, working in partnership with the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), will construct more than a building in the West African nation of Ghana this summer.

They will build a solution to a problem that has plagued the growth of the African independent churches in Ghana for 25 years: biblical and theological training for pastors who are not connected with Western denominations.

The solution, in the words of one MBM board member, will seek to "give them a helping hand, not a handout." On Feb. 23, the MBM board of directors authorized solicitations for up to $40,000 as a special project to support facility needs at the Good News Theological College and Seminary in Accra, Ghana.

'We've never tried a project quite like this.' In addition, MBM will recruit about eight people from North American Mennonite communities with building skills to visit Ghana for two weeks this summer to work alongside West African builders.

"We have never tried to do a project quite like this," says Alice Roth, vice president for global ministries at MBM, which will create a partnership between North American builders and Good News.

Since its founding in 1971 as Good News Training Institute, the seminary served the leadership needs of more than a dozen denominations of African independent churches. These indigenous, African-grown churches arose independent of Western missionary efforts and incorporated traditional African themes and customs into worship.

"For almost 24 years, we have been renting one property after another, living on the benevolence of others," said Thomas Oduro, principal at Good News, who announced the project to students and friends of Good News in a commencement address July 22. "Humanly speaking, it seems impossible and senseless, but . . . you can put your faith into practice by either giving hard cash or some quantities of cement blocks, cement bags, nails, roofing sheets, iron rods, sand, stone, electrical fittings, furniture, or labor."

Working with local builders. Oduro's call to action met the concerns of MBM board members. "People have skills. People have materials. People have know-how," said MBM board member Tesfatsion Dalellew, a native Ethiopian who serves in a development role for World Vision in Seattle, Wash. "People can come with that and put it together to show to the donor what we have done, that we have come this far, but we are unable to do it [alone]."

Several days of work will allow North Americans to learn Ghanaian building codes and work under the supervision of local architects and builders—*Tom Price*

MBM board asks staff for service proposal

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—The service programs of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) took a step toward integration on Feb. 22.

The Mennonite Board of Missions' (MBM) board of directors unanimously authorized staff to develop a proposal for merging MBM's service programs with Mennonite Voluntary Service, which is lodged in the GC's Commission on Home Ministries (CHM).

The staff of the two groups had drafted an initial proposal at a Jan. 29-31 retreat in St. Louis. In a March meeting, the CHM board also affirmed a move toward an integrated structure (see story on page 10).

The strength of moving quickly to merge the separate units came across as almost self-evident here.

"The challenge and opportunity we have is a stronger VS program for both constituencies," said Saul Murcia, MBM coordinator for Voluntary Service.

Applicants "could walk in any door and have access to the whole," said Lois Barrett, CHM executive secretary.

The proposal would lodge administration for Voluntary Service, in which most volunteers serve terms of 1-2 years, in Newton, Kan. Short-term service programs for both denominations would operate out of Elkhart, where MBM already has a more extensive short-term program.

The action assumes the denominations will move toward an integrated mission structure with "mission centers" possibly located in Elkhart, Ind.; Newton, Kan.; Salunga, Pa.; and Winnipeg, Man.

—*Tom Price*

A Virginia church was "hamming it up" over Christmas this past year. The Waynesboro Mennonite Church gave Joe and Sharon Arbaugh a $700 ham radio for Christmas. In January the Arbaughs, serving in Haiti under Mennonite Board of Missions, used the radio to call Waynesboro one Sunday morning.

"We put the call on our public address system and there was a big hand of applause from the congregation," says Andy Anderson, former Waynesboro administrator. Mountain View Mennonite Church of Lyndhurst and Hildebrand Mennonite Church of Waynesboro helped to pay for the radio.—*Connections*

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How many ways can you talk about love? Members of Independence Mennonite Church, Andover, N.Y., discovered a lot of them recently. The congregation met on a Sunday evening in February to prepare presentations based on 1 Corinthians 13 for the next Sunday's worship. There was a choral reading, a story from childhood, a poem, a creative movement ensemble, recitation of memory verses, and a new banner in front of the sanctuary.—*Anne Siegrist*

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A woman's desire to visit her aging father in Laos was the reason for a recent fundraiser at Locust Grove Mennonite Church in Burr Oak, Mich. Khankeo Kerschner was sponsored by the church in 1980 as a refugee from Laos and has since become a member. The church decided to sponsor a return trip to Laos so she can visit her ailing father. Kerschner and volunteers cooked a Laotian supper for 250 people to raise money. Some $3,400 above expenses were contributed to Kerschner's trip, planned for the summer or fall.

The fundraising meal was announced to the congregation by a story that two members of the congregation wrote about Kerschner's escape from Laos and life in refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines. —*J. D. Gerber*

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"Healing Elkhart thru Little People," a violence prevention program, began in November 1995 through the efforts of Goshen (Ind.) College senior social work major Jennifer Christophel and Elkhart high school students. Susan Landes and Mark Chupp, Goshen College alumni who organize mediation efforts in Elkhart, thought that a violence prevention program was needed but didn't have anyone to organize it. Christophel meets with the youth at school and keeps in touch with them on an informal basis. The 20-person youth group has organized neighborhood cleanup projects and alcohol-free dances. —*The Record*

K'ekchi' Mennonites share story of giving

Akron, Pa. (MCC-EMM)—About half of them work on coffee plantations in conditions reminiscent of slavery. Most of the rest scratch out a subsistence on land they may be forced off of any day. They live in dirt-floor shacks with wind and rain blowing through the chinks between the walls' wood slats. Their children become sick for lack of adequate food and medical care and often die young.

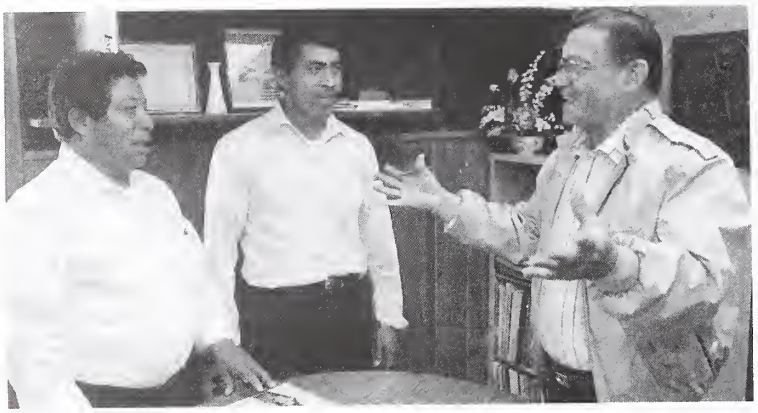
They are K'ekchi', one of Guatemala's largest indigenous groups. And some 5,000 are members of 70 K'ekchi' Mennonite churches in northern Guatemala.

Three years ago church leaders met and decided that although individual congregations were self-supporting, it was time to take more financial ownership for programs supported by North American agencies—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM).

A risky challenge. The leaders' goal was ambitious—to raise one-third of the annual national church budget within five years.

The budget covers work in health, agriculture, literacy and adult education, and a Bible institute. The leaders also asked MCC and EMM not to give their portion of the matching grant until local churches had raised theirs.

"When you have succeeded in this, come to North America and teach us also. We in North America have not nearly achieved the tithe ourselves," MCC administrator Ray Brubacher said at the 1993 meeting.



Pablo Tzul (left) and Sebastian Cuc (middle) of the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church confer with José Santiago, EMM director of Latin America, during a visit to the States this month.

Thus, two K'ekchi' Mennonite leaders visited Pennsylvania congregations from March 7-25 to tell how they reached their goal in such a short time period.

"It was risky for us to put this challenge to the churches," says Pablo Tzul, president of the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church. "It was risky to ask people to give more and to put our programs on the line. We feared losing members or entire congregations."

"Just last week in my sermon I talked about how we all like to receive," Tzul says. "It's like when we are hoeing; we like to pull everything toward us. But we live in God's kingdom and everything we have is from God."

MCC sees North American support of K'ekchi' outreach efforts as one way North Americans can "make choices for justice," says Linda Shelly, MCC area secretary for Latin America.

'The same in front of God.' "The K'ekchi' are not able to fully support their churchwide programs. At the same time, North American Mennonites unintentionally benefit from international economic systems that hurt poor Guatemalans. We can purchase coffee at a low price, for example. Financial partnering with the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church presents an opportunity to choose justice," Shelly says.

When asked what he thinks of the wealth he has seen in Christian homes and churches in the States, Cuc replies, "It doesn't make me angry as much as sad. And it makes me wonder why we are so different when we are the same in front of God."—*Emily Will*

Eastern Mennonite Missions worker Deb Byler teaches Juana Tz'i', a K'ekchi' Mennonite woman, how to read.

MCC helps to title and register K'ekchi' land

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—The K'ekchi' people of Guatemala currently face a predicament that threatens even their precarious subsistence living. Descendants of their lands' earlier owners are appearing to either "reclaim" their land or demand that the K'ekchi' repurchase it.

One group visited a human rights office to ask for help obtaining loans. When the human rights official learned they had worked the land on a coffee plantation for generations for pennies, "he told us, 'The land is yours because you were born there and you have more than paid for it with your labor. You don't owe the owner anything; he owes you,' " relates Sebastian Cuc, vice-president of the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church.

Despite this counsel, the group decided not to push for their rights. "They [the landowners] could kill us all, at least all the leaders; in times past that is what has happened," says Paul Tzul, president of the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church. He is gradually paying 15,000 quetzales (some $2,500 U.S.) to repurchase the nine acres of land his family bought many years ago.

Helping in quest for land. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has recently begun helping the K'ekchi' in their quest to obtain land titles. MCC has employed a half-time Mennonite lawyer from Guatemala City to train some K'ekchi' Mennonites in the legal processes of land registration and title transfer.

K'ekchi' Mennonites will work first at obtaining legal land titles for church properties. In so doing they hope to secure the lands on which their churches are built and also gain experience in the legal processes before starting work on individuals' private property cases.—*Emily Will*

• **Used books wanted.** Books Abroad and At Home centers are requesting used Bibles, New Testaments, and Bible Study helps in good condition. Centers are located in Ephrata and Scottdale, Pa.; Morton and Paxton, Ill.; Harrisonburg, Va.; Goshen, Ind.; and Hesston, Kan. Information on starting a Books Abroad or At Home center is available from Marian B. Hostetler, 421 South 2nd St., Suite 600, Elkhart, IN 46516.

• **Coming events:**

"The Many Faces of Eve: Admitting and Valuing our Diversity," East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., April 21. Sponsored by Nurturing Women for Church Leadership. More information available from 717 442-9888.

78th annual graduation exercises, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., April 28. Lee F. Snyder, vice-president and academic dean, will give the commencement address. More information from 540 432-4211.

70th year celebration of Washington-Baltimore Mennonite churches of Lancaster Conference, Capitol College, Laurel, Md., May 5. Open to anyone who has attended any of the 11 district churches. More information available from pastors of the district churches.

Menno Simons anniversary tour, June 10-26. Led by pastor and historian John L. Ruth and includes 500th anniversary celebration with a Friesland congregation. More information from 800 565-0451.

• **New resources:**

Folktales of Peace is a 22-minute newly released video from Mennonite Central Committee for children K-6. Professional storytellers present three traditional tales from Native American, West African, and Appalachian cultures. Discussion questions included. For a free loan, contact MCC at 717 859-1151.

A Trek from Despair to Renewal: The Peoples of Africa and the Burden of Debt, a 16-page paper by Henry Rempel, is available from Mennonite Central Committee. Explores the debt struggles of people in sub-Saharan Africa. Order from MCC at 717 859-1151.

• **Job openings:**

Administrative assistant to director of business and finance, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Half-time to three-quarter time position. Degree in accounting preferred, training and experience in accounting essential. Available June 15.Contact Virgil Claassen at 219 296-6206.

Administrative assistant to president, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa. Responsibilities include correspondence, scheduling, and recording minutes. Requirements include word processing experience. Full-time position begins June 3. Contact Lamar Myers at 717 898-2251.

Cafeteria manager/head cook, Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind. Responsibilities include managing the cafeteria that serves some 300 students and supervising personnel. Experience in food service is helpful. Contact Allan Dueck, 219 534-2567.

Coordinator of guest services, Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich. Full-time responsibilities include housekeeping and supervision of volunteers. Position is available April 15. Contact Cathy Beery Berg at 616 476-2426.

Director of information services, Philhaven Behavioral Healthcare Services, Mt. Gretna, Pa. Responsibilities include overall departmental leadership, strategic planning, and some programming. Leadership ability and 3-5 years of information technology experience required. Send letter and résumé to Human Resources, Philhaven, PO Box 550, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064.

Faculty positions, Hesston (Kan.) College. Openings in mathematics, psychology/campus counselor, and music and keyboard instruction. Available in fall 1996. More information available from 316 327-8206. Send résumé and three references to Paul Keim, academic dean, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston KS 67062.

Instrumental music position, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School and Locust Grove Mennonite School. Full-time position is shared between the schools and open in August. Contact J. Richard Thomas at 717 299-0436.

Library receptionist/used book sales coordinator, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Historical Society. Full-time position begins May 15. Responsibilities include coordinating an annual used book sale and cataloging books for rare, out-of-print, and used book auction. Computer experience, knowledge of German, and ability to supervise volunteers desired. Contact Carolyn Wenger, 717 393-9745.

Staff openings, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa. Office assistant/reservation clerk and maintenance positions available. More information and applications available from 800 864-7747.

Teaching positions, Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind. Openings for 1996-97 are orchestra instruction, mathematics, and computer science. Contact Allan Dueck, 219 534-2567.

Vice-president for advancement and administration, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Responsibilities include administering public relations and development. Administrative experience in church institution, experience in development work, and knowledge of pastoral and theological education preferred. Starting date no later than July 1, 1997. Contact 219 296-6244 for nominations, applications, or inquiries.

Drawing water from the well. *Lititz, Pa.*—Mel Wenger shows Lauren Fox how to draw water using a tube well at a Lititz (Pa.) Mennonite Church fundraiser for clean water projects in Tanzania. The congregation held a soup, bread, and dessert buffet on Feb. 28 and raised $896 for the Mennonite Central Committee project. The meal was part of the church's World Relief Fellowship Day in which members knotted comforters, rolled bandages, and packaged pencils and Easter favors for MCC and other relief organizations.

NEW MEMBERS

Blooming Glen, Pa.: A. Patricia Alderfer, Todd D. Connell, Jennifer Sue Godshall, Kathryn Lynne Hagel, Mai Ann

Hazlett, Charlotte Hunsberger, Walter Linde-Zwirble, Todd M. Moyer, Gwen Ziesel, and J. Edward and Frances Moyer.

Bluesky, Alta.: Benjamin Kauffman, David Kauffman, Jonathan Mullet, and Clifford Weber.

Clinton Frame, Goshen, Ind.: John E. Miller, Jr.

Huntington, Newport News, Va.: Jacob Thornton.

Lockport, Stryker, Ohio: Adam Cobb.

Maple Grove, Belleville, Pa.: Melissa Davis, Heidi Yoder, and Lyndsey Glick.

Marion, Shipshewana, Ind.: Chris Mast, Stacey Egli, Chris Mishler, B. J. Mishler, Amy Bontreger, Nathaniel Mauck, Erin Bontrager, Maria Hershberger, Katie Smart, Kathy Spaulding, Kevin Spaulding, Shelby Spaulding, Lonnie Niccum, Rusty Niccum, Kari Bontrager, Amy Deal, Kevin Miller, Daryl Hershberger, and Geri Hershberger.

Rockhill, Telford, Pa.: Pam Brunner, Ron Souder, and Shirley Souder.

Zion, Broadway, Va.: Christopher R. Mast, Lynette Mast, Robert P. Pence, and Celah K. Pence.

BIRTHS

Blosser, Brenda Going and Vernon Dale, Wichita, Kan., Laura Elisabeth (second child), March 12.

Cortez, Eva Harris and Wade, Slidell, La., Madeline Amelia (first child), Feb. 21.

Darling, Jeanette Gault and Timothy, Williamsburg, Va., Andrew Philip (third child), Feb. 13.

Fitz-Gerald, Ruth Weldy and Kevin, Defiance, Ohio, Garrett William (fourth child), Jan. 27.

Litwiller, Carol Zimmerman and William, Jr., Minier, Ill., Jacob William (first child), Jan. 9.

Simione, Melissa, Lancaster, Pa., Aaliyah Miranda (first child), Jan. 12.

Snader, Lisa Oswald and Charles, Goshen, Ind., Jordan Charles (first child), March 10.

Swartzendruber, Marge Kempf and Will, Shickley, Neb., Christina Ruth (third child), Feb. 24.

Woods, Marcie Lefever and Jim, Edmonton, Alta., Keyana Miyoko (first child), Feb. 22.

MARRIAGES

Klingelsmith-Short: Sarah Klingelsmith, Archbold, Ohio (Central), and Ryan Short, Archbold, Ohio (Central), March 9, by Lois Hartman and Wilmer Hartman.

DEATHS

Brenneman, Thelma Gilnett, 80, Goshen, Ind. Born: April 28, 1915, Scottdale, Pa., to Austin and Kate Johnson Gilnett. Died: March 5, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Orlo C. Brenneman; children: Janet Wingrove, Judith Garifine, Joseph D., Joyce LeMasters, James, John T.; 26 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Mennonite Church of Warsaw. Funeral and burial: March 9, Salem Mennonite Church, by John Brunk.

Bontrager, Fannie Anna, 92, Goshen, Ind. Born: Jan. 18, 1904, LaGrange County, Ind., to David A. and Mary Hostetler Bontrager. Died: March 3, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Funeral: March 6, North Goshen Mennonite Church, by Art Smoker and Jerry Wittrig. Burial: Bontrager Cemetery.

Cressman, Blanche Hillegass, 93, Hatfield, Pa. Born: July 19, 1902, Worcester, Pa., to Warren and Ella Schlosser Hillegass. Died: March 8, 1996, Harleysville, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—son: Norman H.; brother: Lester Hillegass; 8 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Norman M. Cressman (husband) and Doris Mae Nase (daughter). Funeral: March 11, Peter Becker Community Chapel, by Glenn M. Alderfer, Earl D. Yoder, and Steven C. Nyce. Burial: Towamencin Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Huber, Beulah L., 89, Lititz, Pa. Born: July 10, 1906, Rothsville, Pa., to Samuel B. and Lillian W. Loose Good. Died: Feb. 29, 1996, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—children: Verna M. Lehman, Harold Eugene; brothers and sister: Howard L., Richard L., Elmer L., Naomi McClune; 6 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Willis B. Huber (husband). Funeral: March 2, Lititz Mennonite Church, by Dennis Ernest, Jacob Frederick, and Parke Heller. Burial: Hammer Creek Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Krabill, Vincent, 78, Wayland, Iowa. Born: Jan. 18, 1918, Wayland, Iowa, to Lester and Lena Rich Krabill. Died: March 5,1996, Phoenix, Ariz., from an aortic aneurism. Survivors—wife: Estelle Sutter Krabill; children: Ann Burkholder, Rebecca Hauder, Martha Detweiler; brother and sisters: Milburn, Jeanette Christner, Evelyn Williams, JoAnna McCreedy; 8 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Rosemary Krabill (daughter). Funeral: March 9, Trinity Mennonite Church, by Peter B. Wiebe and Stan Shantz. Cremated.

LaValley, Virgie Dufrene, 84, Des Allemands, La. Born: Aug. 30, 1911, St. Charles Parish, La., to Noel and Victoria Dufrene. Died: Jan. 6, 1996, Luling, La. Survivors—daughter: Venida Foret; 2 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Harry LaValley (third husband), Ted Folse (second husband), Philip Comardelle (first husband), and Verna Hartsell (daughter). Funeral

Painting faces for peace. *Atglen, Pa. (MCC)*—Leah Wilde (left) paints Jenna Stoltzfus' face during West Fallowfield Christian School's "Share Fair" on Feb. 9. Students organized the event to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee's bombie removal project in Laos. Students purchased tickets to enjoy some 20 activities and games and for food. The students' efforts raised $800 to help remove bombies from schoolyards in Lao villages.

"Bad things can happen," Wilde says about what she learned about peace and war through this project. "You feel bad because you wish it happened to you and not someone else."

and burial: Jan. 9, Des Allemands Mennonite Church, by Marvin LeBlanc.

Mast, Rachel Miller, 80, Belleville, Pa. Born: March 27, 1915, Welshfield, Ohio, to Menno D. and Rachel Gingerich Mast. Died: Jan. 15, 1996, Belleville, Pa. Survivors—children: Rita Kanagy, Jerry, Lana Byler; sisters: Mary Ann Byler, Clara Miller; 7 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Amos Mast (husband). Congregational membership: Bethel Mennonite Church. Funeral: Jan. 17, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by Ivan Yoder and Ervin Miller. Burial: Locust Grove Cemetery.

Miller, Elizabeth Mast, 71, Orrville, Ohio. Born: Aug. 4, 1924, Wilmot, Ohio, to Isaac and Amanda Mast. Died: March 8, 1996, Wooster, Ohio, of a heart attack. Survivors—husband: Jacob Miller; children: Dean, Gary, Ann Sullivan; brother and sister: Monroe Mast, Annie Yoder; 8 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: March 12, Kidron Mennonite Church, by Herman Myers.

Neville, Katherine Ruth Slagell, 86, Attica, Kan. Born: April 4, 1910, Crystal Springs, Kan., to Christian and Barbara Slagell. Died: March 4, 1996, LaJunta, Colo., of a stroke and pneumonia. Survivors—children: Carolyn Hindry, Phillip; sisters: Irene and Bernice Slagell; 2 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Tilden Neville (husband). Funeral: March 6, Emmanuel Mennonite Church, by Merritt Welty. Burial: Fairview Cemetery.

Presley, William Carl "Bill," 78, Knoxville, Tenn. Born: April 1, 1917, Knox County, Tenn. Died: March 1, 1996, Knoxville, Tenn., of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Addie Mae Presley; sons: William J., Richard M. "Mike"; brothers and sister: George, Jack, Charles, Fannie Ferguson; 10 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Knoxville Mennonite Church. Funeral: March 4, Mynatt's Chapel, by Edward M. Godshall and Billy McCool. Burial: New Gray Cemetery.

Ruby, Marie, 74, Pigeon, Mich. Born: Nov. 16, 1921, Thurman, Colo., to Aaron and Catharine Schwartzentruber Ruby. Died: March 9, 1996, Pigeon, Mich., of cancer. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Joseph, Walter, Emma Riemenschneider, Edith Swartzendruber. Funeral and burial: March 12, Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, by Jay Miller and Luke Yoder.

Schertz, Florence S. Landis, 99, Eureka, Ill. Born: Nov. 29, 1896, Union, Ore., to Amos Stauffer and Sabina Ebersole Landis. Died: Feb. 28, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivors—sons: Robert L., Burtron D., Ronald B.; 6 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Raymond J. Schertz (husband). Funeral and burial: March 2, Roanoke Mennonite Church, by Elmer Wyse and Rick Troyer.

Troyer, Luella G. Hooley, 86, Goshen, Ind. Born: March 27, 1909, Shipshewana, Ind., to Joseph Y. and Gertrude Yoder Hooley. Died: March 2, 1996, Goshen, Ind., of pneumonia. Survivors—husband: Paul W. Troyer; children: Dorcas Lara, Eunice Chupp, Delton, Paul, David, Walter, Burl; 16 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 6, Waterford Mennonite Church, by Lloyd L. Miller and Marvin D. Yoder. Burial: Shore Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Weaver, C. Raymond, 73, Sellersville, Pa. Born: May 26, 1922, Quakertown, Pa., to William and Martha Kolb Weaver. Died: March 3, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Freida E. Eshelman Weaver; children: Linda J., Ronald; sisters: Ethel Benner, Lois Benner, Thelma Landis; 2 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: March 6, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by David A. Stevens and Truman H. Brunk.

Yoder, Fannie E., 89, South Hutchinson, Kan. Born: Oct. 13, 1906, Thomas, Okla., to Edward F. and Fannie M. Yoder Bontrager. Died: March 11, 1996, South Hutchinson, Kan., of heart failure. Survivors—children: Marvin, Loren, Ruth Miller, Patricia Kumpfer; brothers and sisters: Paul, Edna, and Katie Bontrager, Nora Yutzy, Mary Ann Miller, Alice Stutzman; 6 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: March 14, Yoder Mennonite Church, by Dan Kauffman and Peter Hartman.

Baltimore YES teams train for service. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Nine Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams sponsored by Easter Mennonite Missions left the Lancaster area in early January for service assignments in nine countries. Members of five of those teams spent September through December in training in Baltimore, Md. They are:

Front row *(left to right):* David Rettew to Barbados; Gordon Wenger to Peru; Jeff Nolt, Barbados team leader; Steve Denlinger to Lithuania; Elia Yousif Khoury to the West Bank; Ivan Hill to Peru.

Second row: Valerie Jantz to Peru; Michele Stauffer to Germany; Angela Martin to Lithuania; Asta Ragauskaite to Lithuania; Shelley Grayek to the West Bank; Leah Everett to Peru; Patricia Lingehoel, Peru team leader.

Third row: Jennifer Weaver to Germany; Jenifer Eriksen to the West Bank; Janelle Mohler, Germany team leader; Aimee Neuenschwander to Barbados; Suelda Barbosa to Peru; Christine Burkholder to Germany; Mashelle Mummau to Barbados; Jessica Stutzman to Lithuania; Jung Hye Kim to the West Bank.

Back row: Matt Carlson to Germany; Linford Hurst to Germany; Jonathan Bowman, West Bank team leader; Barry Freed, Lithuania team leader; Vidas Girskis to Lithuania; Chris Risser to Barbados; Sang Geun Lee to the West Bank.

Newspaper

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On a hill—far away

I hate the sight of blood. When it starts to flow, I turn into the ultimate wimp. The joke at our house is that when someone gets hurt, shoo dad out of the way first and then take care of the injured. Otherwise you'll have two disasters on your hands.

Had I been one of the twelve Jesus chose to follow him during his ministry on earth, I have no doubt about where I'd have been during his last days. I'd be one of those disciples you don't read anything about in the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion—as far away from the cross as I could get. How those women could stand for hours at its foot boggles my mind.

I suspect I have company. We don't make much of the crucifixion in our observance of the last days of Jesus' life. Oh, we talk about Lent and sacrifice, about confession and forgiveness, even about Jesus' agony and prayer in the garden. But most of us hurry past the gruesome details of the crucifixion to the resurrection.

Those of us who don't have the stomach for the crucifixion prefer "to stay home from Palm Sunday through Good Friday, showing up just in time for the trumpets on Easter morning," writes Barbara Brown Taylor in *Christian Century* (3/13/96). If we do decide to live through the crucifixion, we "hang on to each other . . . telling every resurrection story we can think of."

Not so the Gospel writers. All four of them give more space to Jesus' betrayal, denial, and crucifixion than to any other event in his life. Depending on how you count, there are at least four and one-half times as many verses in the Bible about the crucifixion as about the resurrection.

Nor are we spared the details. Here are blood and gore, screams of pain, crowns of thorns and nails going through hands and feet. We have the spear piercing Jesus' side and the bones of the other criminals being crushed.

Why all this attention to detail? Why all the space to Jesus' crucifixion and death?

One simple answer is that Jesus' followers were surely traumatized by the experience. Like those who go through the horrible and the incomprehensible today, the best way they had to deal with it was to talk and talk about it—and later to write and rewrite the story.

And perhaps, like all good writers, those who wrote the Gospels also understood the human fascination with suffering and death. While many of us call for good news rather than bad in our papers—or won't admit to watching "America's Most Wanted"—we are drawn to stories of tragedies, perhaps dealing with our own fears and anxieties as we vicariously live the experiences of others.

But there's more to the crucifixion story than a fascination with the fearful. Could it be that in telling the events of the last days of Jesus' life, the Gospel writers wanted to bring us to a more realistic understanding of ourselves and that from which we have been saved?

We would never have treated Jesus the way he was treated, we like to believe. Yet, as Arthur Paul Boers reminds us this issue (page 1), who of us hasn't betrayed the trust of another, hurt someone who was vulnerable, neglected to show mercy, or failed to give love to those closest to us?

We also know, if we're honest, that we too deserve to die—that any righteousness we can summon looks awfully puny in relation to the sin, the corruption, and the deceit in our lives. Yet the crucifixion also reminds us that, in some mysterious way that we don't quite understand, Jesus' death takes away the need for our own in God's eternal scheme.

Now that's not a popular way for people to think of themselves these days. We're to see the best in each other, including ourselves. Self-realization, not self-deprivation, is how we want to live. And while that too is part of the gospel, it can only come after we face our true selves and acknowledge what we would be without our Savior, Jesus Christ.

This year I resolve not to rush to Easter. Instead, I want to become more aware of the crucifixion, allowing its awfulness to penetrate into the very being that I am—one whose eternal fate could have been death, both for what I've done and what I've left undone.

Jesus beckons me to come a bit closer to the cross on the hill at Calvary this season. I know I won't like what I see—and in my squeamishness be tempted to run. But I also know that, however rough it may be, this is the way to the eternal celebration of Easter.—*jlp*

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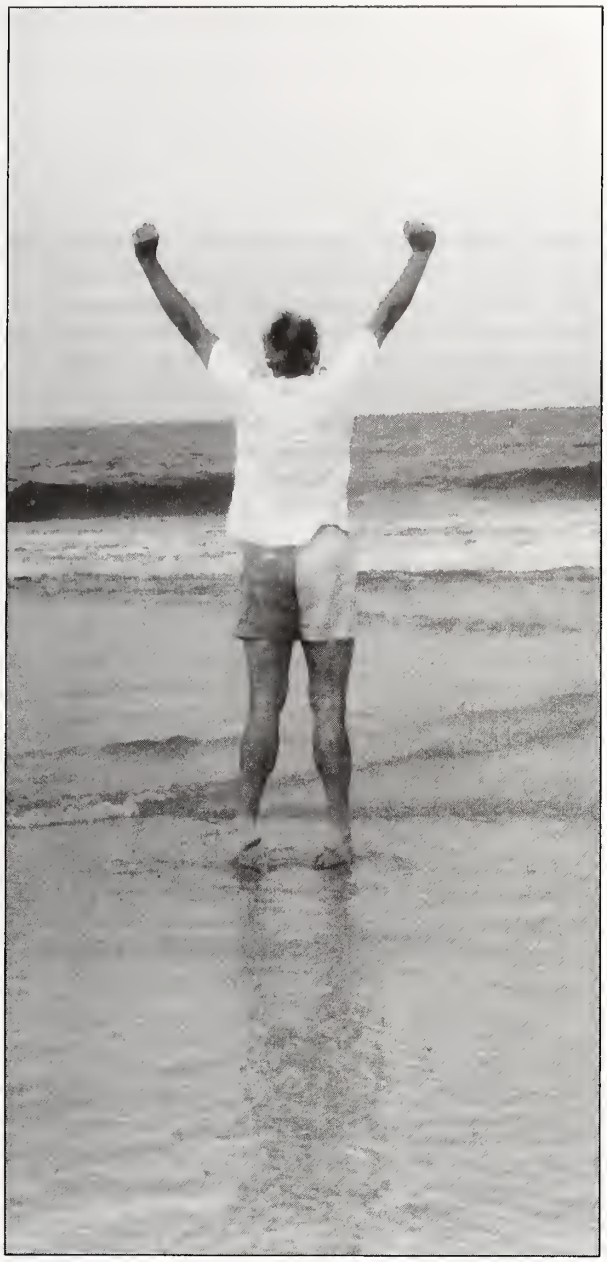
April 9, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



As a result of God's shout, we can set our minds on things above. We can do the good works God prepared in advance for us to do, and we can give ourselves fully to this work, for we know it is not in vain.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus:
Since Jesus has been raised from the dead 6

Ryan Ahlgrim:
'Just because you have doubts does not mean you are excluded' 7

Resolution to oust congregations loses by three votes in Illinois 9

Hondurans renew struggle against forced military service 10

God gave one powerful shout at Easter

It was a shout to conquer the powers of evil, to awaken us to the fact that we are dead in our sins, but also to tell us we have power to transcend our darkness.

by Larry Augsburger

One of the more powerful stories in the Bible is that of the fall of the city of Jericho. The sixth chapter of Joshua tells how the children of Israel marched around the city one time each for six days and then returned to their camp. On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times, and at the end gave such a shout that "the walls came a-tumblin' down."

That was one powerful shout. It was designed to conquer the forces of evil. It resounded in the hearts of the children of Israel because it declared that God was at work for them. But that shout also struck terror in the people of Canaan because it spelled their doom.

God's raising Jesus from the grave on the first Easter was also a shout. It was a shout that contained the power of God and conquered the forces of evil. God came into history and shouted: "Oh no you don't!" to death; "Prepare to face your doom!" to evil; and "Death has been swallowed up in victory!" to people everywhere. God's raising of Jesus is a triumphant shout that continues to resound through the ages.

The apostle Paul defines that shout in Ephe-

Our response to God's shout in history should be to pick up that shout and pass it on to others who have not yet heard it, telling them the good news of God's power.

sians 2:1-10 in which he explores the meaning of Jesus' resurrection for the average Christian. "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world. . . . All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath" (Eph. 2:1-3).

Paul says that all people outside of Christ are incapable of not sinning. They are therefore separated from God, who is the source of life. In that separation from God, they both experience and spread death.

This relationship is not always evident in the physical realm. Spiritually dead people often appear to themselves and others to be having a wonderful time; sometimes they even feign spirituality. Because they can't see into the eternal realm, they do not realize that they are spiritually dead.

Such people view reports of their deadness in much the same way that the passengers of the *Titanic* first viewed the report that their magnificent, stable, unsinkable ship was sinking. No one had any idea that the minor bump they had felt was of any significance. To those on deck there was no sign of damage. Just so, few people can imagine their spiritual deadness.

But the *Titanic's* chief engineer knew that the bulkheads that created the ship's watertight compartments stopped at a certain deck level, and that one too many of the bow compartments had been torn open. He knew that the weight of the water in those compartments would pull the bow low enough so that the water in the last flooded compartment would flow into the next compartment, and the next, until finally the ship sank into the depths.

The chief engineer issued the shout that the ship was sinking, but few were willing to hear. The crew, obeying the order to assist the passengers in abandoning ship, found few takers for the first lifeboats because the choice between the warm, bright, solid unsinkable *Titanic* and a small, dark, cold lifeboat bobbing in the North Atlantic wasn't hard to make. These passengers couldn't be bothered with the report that the ship was sinking, just like many cannot be bothered by the report that they are dead in their sins. How can you believe the ship is sinking when the band is playing and the lights are bright? How can you believe you are dead in sin when you're having so much fun? But the shout of Easter is intended to waken people to the fact that they are indeed dead in their sins.

God announced rescue from the deadness of sin in his great shout of Easter. "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:4-6).

We must struggle with a contradiction between what Paul defines as reality and what we experience as that reality. He seems to say in this passage and others that once one becomes a Christian one is free from the power of sin. All is forgiven, all is overcome, and one becomes a sinless, triumphant being.

But we still live in the physical realm, and we see an ongoing struggle with sin. We still feel powerful temptations and see many who claim to be Christians living in the darkness of sin. Is there something wrong with us when we don't rise triumphantly above sin as Paul seems to indicate is an accomplished fact?

Paul calls for an act of will on our part to experience victory. Winning victory over sin requires that we cooperate with God and lay hold of the power God makes available to us. "Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires" (Eph. 2:11-12).

In the winter of 1995 the prestigious Baring Brothers Bank of London went bankrupt as a result of $1.4 billion of losses piled up by a maverick trader in its Singapore branch. Administrators of the bank received a report of the danger they were in due to Nick Leeson's unsupervised trading the previous fall. With this warning they could have laid hold of their

power and fired Nick Leeson. The administration chose not to do this, however, and their bank went bankrupt.

In the same way we can choose not to cooperate with God and to ignore the power he makes available. The Easter shout has made available to us the power to escape from the deadness of sin; it's a rescue helicopter arriving at the slanting deck of the listing *Titanic.*

The meaning of the shout for us is that we have been given power to transcend our deadness in sin in this world if we lay hold of it. And when the powers of evil have been completely overcome, we can look forward to an eternity with God. "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6-7).

Our response to the shout of God in history is to join in accomplishing God's purposes in the world. That means picking up the shout of God's good news and telling others who haven't heard it yet. It means developing a ministry of love, caring, and compassion to people still dead in sin. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10).

These good works include clothing ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (Col. 3:12-17). "Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58).

As the children of Israel gave a well-planned shout that tumbled the walls of Jericho and resounded through the land of Canaan, so God gave a well-planned shout on the first Easter that resounds through the ages. That shout says that all people outside Christ are dead in sin, that Christians have been given power to transcend that sin, and that Christians have a wonderful hope in heaven.

Now we can do the good works which God prepared in advance for us to do. We can set our minds on things above. And we can give ourselves fully to the work of God because we know that our labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Larry Augsburger is pastor of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio. He also serves as an editorial consultant for Gospel Herald.

***"So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above . . . for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ."* —Col. 3:1-3**

Gospel Herald

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I affirm the wisdom and sanity of your counsel that "the rhetoric is too intense and the volume too high" for district conferences to vote at this time on the possible ouster of congregations who accept homosexual members (***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer,*** Mar. 12). Waiting is often a difficult spiritual discipline, but I believe it's the discipline we're called to on this matter at this time.

I also believe CFLS could serve us much better if it would lead us in the spiritual discipline of waiting rather than attempting to rewrite history as in ***Council on Faith, Life, and Strategy Issues Statement on Meaning of 'Dialogue'*** (Dec. 12, 1995).

Sue C. Steiner
Waterloo, Ont.

Thank you so much for your courageous editorial ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12). For you to risk asking the church to "wait" before opting for expulsion of congregations who welcome people of same-sex orientation is a very courageous act.

"Wait" surely seems like a timely word. While we wait it might be useful to pray and reflect deeply on the parable of the tares in Matt. 13:24-43.

Thank you too for the personal stories of faith series. Ted Koontz's ***Being Born Again Is Possible . . .*** (Feb. 13) and John Roth's ***Revival Fires and an Anabaptist Pilgrimage*** (Mar. 12) both touched me. God's unique work of grace in the life of each person never ceases to amaze me.

Ann Showalter
Denver, Colo.

I must write to thank you for the incredibly difficult job you continue to do for the rest of us in the church. I can't imagine how it must feel to get the amount of criticism you receive from time to time for doing the job we've asked you to do. Thank you for having the heart to continue to help all of us by printing a wide range of articles and news notes.

Particularly I want to thank you for printing Ted Koontz's article ***Being Born Again Is Possible, Even for a Stodgy, Middle-Aged Seminary Professor*** (Feb. 13). It is so refreshing to hear unpretentious, honest sharing in this way. I am dismayed when this type of genuineness is picked apart theologically or viewed as "embarrassing," as in "Readers Say," Mar. 12. Truly, authentic, true-to-the-spirit sharing is what real church is all about. Let's celebrate it, not criticize it! Second, I want to thank you for telling all of us about the Supportive Congregations Network conference to be held in June (***Dancing at the Table . . .*** Jan. 9). I have joined the ever-growing host of Christians who don't have all the answers on homosexuality but want to err on the side of love, if that is possible. I honestly believe that if Jesus were here in a physical body, he would be the first to register at this conference and would embrace all who yearn for a place at the table with him.

Jane Miller Leatherman
Goshen, Ind.

I was amazed and disappointed that your printed the announcement, ***Dancing at the Table . . .*** (Jan. 9). I am further amazed and saddened by your editorial ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12).

You wondered whether exclusion is in the spirit of Jesus. But is that not exactly what the Spirit told the believers at Corinth to do when professing Christians continued their practice of sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5:1-13)? You said, "Insights and convictions about faithfulness on this issue are subject to God's timing." But has not God already spoken to the issue by telling us in the Word that "neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10)?

I will continue to invite all persons to my local church—regardless of sexual orientation—since it is, after all, a hospital for sinners. But I will receive into membership only those who repent from their sins and are washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. 6:11).

Robert D. Wengerd
Boardman, Ohio

Thank you for Ryan Ahlgrim's article ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19). This topic is one of the most divisive that the church has faced, and Ahlgrim gives a thorough, insightful, useful, and well-balanced framework from which to address it. I am deeply appreciative of his contribution.

I also want to thank you for your editorial ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12). It is so very obvious that the church is in no position to make definitive decisions on the issue of homosexuality—especially not ones which result in the expulsion of entire congregations. In spite of unilateral statements from the Council on Faith, Life, and Strategy to the contrary (Dec. 12), this issue still deeply divides the church. We are not of one mind, and the heat of the debate indicates that we are nowhere near ready to take further action on this issue.

Steven L. Mullet
Elkhart, Ind.

Thanks for the excellent March 19 issue of *Gospel Herald.* In my opinion, biblical interpretation is the most important issue facing the Mennonite Church and the church universal at this time. The practical issues of church membership, sexuality, abortion, et al., all are informed or confused by the differing ways we look at the Bible and hear God's Spirit speaking to us.

So often it seems, the people expressing opinions in our congregations, conferences, or in "Readers Say" are talking past each other—not even speaking the same language. But if we are willing to do the task of looking together more carefully at how we read and understand the Bible, we will

Pontius' Puddle

THE ALL-FOREST FELLOWSHIP QUICKLY DISSOLVED AFTER THE HERBIVORES DISCOVERED THAT WHILE THEY WERE PRAYING, THE CARNIVORES WERE SAYING GRACE.

come closer to a common understanding of God's will for us.

In a fast-food society, we are tempted to leave the interpretive "cooking" to someone else and pick up our view "to go." While we may be willing to strive for excellence in academics, the workplace, or athletics, we spend little time either in study of Scripture or in listening together to the Spirit's voice.

Thanks to Harold N. Miller, Ryan Ahlgrim, and your editorial for reminding us of both the difficulties and the necessity of working together to humbly discern God's leading.

Randall J. Roth
Des Moines, Iowa

The article ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19) was a confirmation of what I believe. Ryan Ahlgrim's suggestions certainly make sense. This article is must reading for anyone who seriously reads and contemplates the Bible.

Can you image how much healthier the Christian church would be if it would follow these 17 principles?

Jim Drescher
Smoketown, Pa.

Ryan Ahlgrim's article, ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19) falls into the maze of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. It demonstrates well why the "common people heard him gladly."

Having gone through the perennial scholastic maze during my graduate studies, I understand where Ahlgrim is coming from. But one obvious omission in his elaborate outline and evasive conclusion is a simple truth from Paul:

"Which things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto Him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:13-14).

Anyone wishing to experience a breath of fresh air should read Eta Linnemann's book, *Historical Criticism of the Bible* (Baker). She too had wandered in the scholastic maze until she humbly received the "ingrafted word." She urges her readers to do as she has done—burn all her "scholarly books."

I fear anyone going to the lost world armed with Ahlgrim's 17 principles will find themselves nearly powerless to bring people to the loving Savior.

J. Otis Yoder
Breezewood, Pa.

We, the undersigned, had the privilege of participating in Promise Keepers' "Fan the Flame" clergy conference in Atlanta, Ga., Feb. 13-15, 1996. We were among the more than 40,000 ministers of different races, denominations, and theological traditions who gathered for this historic event.

What made this event significant was the presence of God in our midst. God met us in Atlanta in a very powerful way. We experienced God's presence in brokenness, repentance, confession, reconciliation, and celebration. We were challenged to a renewed sense of call and admonished to be godly husbands and fathers. We were urged to be leaders of integrity, humility, and brokenness, and we were confronted with the responsibility to break down the walls of denominationalism and racial separation.

We believe that God is doing something as we approach the end of this century. We are praying that God will revive the church and bring awakening to the lost. We are convinced that only a revival and spiritual awakening can impact our society for righteousness; spiritually transformed people have a transforming effect on their society.

As Mennonite ministers, we are concerned and burdened for our church. We sense at times a lack of openness to the moving of the Holy Spirit, an attitude of spiritual complacency, a suspicion of personal piety, and a reluctance to embrace that which is not distinctly "Mennonite."

While we affirm and appreciate our Mennonite-Anabaptist faith tradition, we call on the Mennonite Church to repent. We must repent of our pride of programs. Programs have their place, but programs, organizations, and institutions cannot bring a move of God. Our programs can cause us to have a low view of God, whereby we are under the delusion that we can do it ourselves.

We must repent of our denominationalism and pride of history. We thank God for the early Anabaptists. God used them mightily to impact their world. But that was then; this is now. We don't live in the 16th century, and we need a Spirit-filled, credible witness in our own day.

But we must repent of our theological compromise. There are those among us who have a low view of Scripture, a deficient Christology, a confusion regarding salvation, and a contemporary sociological rather than a kingdom worldview. As one Promise Keepers' speaker put it: "Mist in the pulpit is fog in the pew."

Our prayer for the Mennonite Church is that we would be open to a fresh view of the Holy Spirit which would result in our being a revived people with a commitment to biblical truth and to Christ as the only way of salvation.

The Promise Keepers movement is one vehicle God is using as a means of bringing revival. As a Mennonite Church, we would do well to embrace and affirm what God is doing through this movement.

Jesse Adams (F)
Robert Alger (V)
Earl Anders (F)
J. Nelson Bechtold (L)
Wesley Boyer (AC)
James Brubaker (L)
William Brunk (F)
Randy Brunstetter (F)
Bill Clifton (V)
Lowell Delp (F)
Victor Dunning (AC)
Wilmer Eby (L)
James Fahnestock (L)
Preston Fry (Fr)
Fred Garber (L)
Duane Gingrich (V)
John Good (L)
J. Brent Hess (L)
James Hess (V)
Lloyd Hoover (L)
Glen Horst (V)
Kenneth Horst (V)
Tom Horst (L)
Robert Kochert (Fr)
Mark Kraybill (AC)
Roy Kreider (V)
Wayne Kuhns (Fr)
John Landis (L)
Dennis Layman (V)
Daniel Leaman (L)
James Leaman (L)
Mark Leaman (L)
Galen Lehman (Fr)
Wilbur Lentz (L)
Jeffrey Ludwig (AC)
Curt Malizzi (AC)
Dale Martin (Fr)
Gerald Martin (V)
Richard Martin (V)
Tim Martin (V)
James Maust (F)
Greg Mayo (V)
Galen Moyer (V)
Larry Moyer (F)
Marlin Neil (Fr)
Charles Ness (F)
Jeffrey Nicely (L)
M. John Nissley (L)
Leon Oberholtzer (L)
Gary Quackenbos (Fr)
Raymond Reitz (L)
Lindsey Robinson (L)
Jerry Roth (Fr)
Jack Scandrett (AC)
Leon Schnupp (L)
Paul Seland (V)
Samuel Sheeler (L)
Leon Shirk (AC)
Stanley Shirk (V)
Kenton Slabaugh (V)
Menno Sollenberger (Fr)
Larry Stapleton (L)
Amos Stoltzfus (AC)
David Stoltzfus (AC)
Harvey Stoltzfus (AC)
Kevin Streif (V)
Mark Wadel (Fr)
David Weaver (L)
Keith Weaver (L)
Orie Wenger (V)
Charles Wert (L)
Steve Wingfield (V)
Randy Witmer (L)
Doug Yoder (V)
Vernon Zook (V)

Conference symbols:
AC = Atlantic
F = Franconia
Fr = Franklin
L = Lancaster
V = Virginia

Since Jesus has been raised

The resurrection of Jesus Christ must affect how we live today as Christians. It makes possible a transformed life continuing for us into the hereafter.

by Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus

When we consider the resurrection, we can only stand in awe at the wideness of God's love, the greatness of God's power, and the wisdom of God's plan when we consider the resurrection of Christ. We don't have the capacity to give God adequate praise for this event. But trying to understand what Jesus' resurrection means for us today can save us from the selfishness, shallowness, callousness, and worldliness that prevent our fervent praise to our risen Lord.

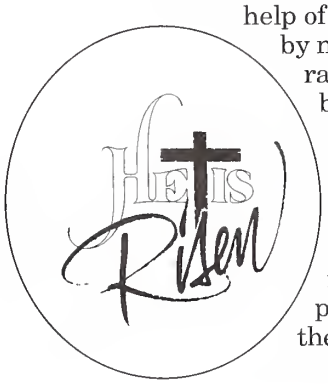
1. Jesus' resurrection means that Jesus was shown to be the Son of God.

The apostle Paul—that persecutor turned servant of Christ—couldn't stop talking and writing about the meaning of Jesus' resurrection. He said that Jesus "was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:4).

2. Jesus' resurrection means the defeat of evil power by God's power.

Paul said "having disarmed the powers and authorities, he [God] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col. 2:15). The powers of evil didn't have a chance when it came to winning over God's power and plan of redemption.

And Peter—that former coward turned bold by the power of the Holy Spirit—said to the crowd on the day of Pentecost, "You, with the help of wicked men, put [Jesus] to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead . . . because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him" (Acts 2:23-24).



Herman G. Stuempfle says, "In this babe in a manger, this peasant on a donkey, this dead man on a cross was hidden the power which has been able to shake the nations and shape history."

3. Jesus' resurrection means a power similar to the one that raised him from the dead is available in our lives.

Paul spoke of God's "incomparably great power for us who believe," and said, "That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead . . ." (Eph: 1:19-20). A power like that which raised Jesus from death dwells and operates within those who are his.

Paul says there is an incomparably great power for us who believe. The immeasurable power of God that raised Jesus to life is now at work in the believer. Who of us will believe and appropriate that profound truth?

Someone has said that God has given believers a life so new that it can only be said that he has raised them from the dead. Paul spoke in those terms when he said, "Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom. 6:4).

4. Jesus' resurrection means motivation and power for mission.

After his resurrection, Christ commissioned his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, saying, "surely I will be with you always" (Matt. 28:16-20).

Henry H. Halley in *Halley's Bible Handbook* writes, "Jesus rose nevermore to die. He is ALIVE now, and is with his people, in guiding and protecting power, all the time."

Jesus' disciples were beaten and dispirited at the crucifixion, but shortly afterward they were ready to preach, go to prison, and even die for the sake of Jesus. What caused the transformation? Christ had risen, and this formed the main theme of their preaching and gave them inspiration and power.

Before he ascended into heaven, Christ told them, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

We, his followers, are to be his witnesses in our hometowns, in surrounding areas, and to the ends of the earth. He has all the resources of power and grace. All that is lacking is our surrendered will, faith, and trust.

5. Jesus' resurrection means hope for life after this life.

Jesus revealed to Martha, that former worried cook now discussing the resurrection, "I am the resurrection and the life. [Whoever] believes

from the dead

in me will live, even though [that one] dies" (John 11:25).

Paul said, "By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also" (1 Cor. 6:14).

There is a vital link between our present existence and our future state. Paul said, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you" (Rom. 8: 11). Through the Spirit there will be no shock to our systems when we depart this life—that is a truth to be savored.

Peter describes it thus: "In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

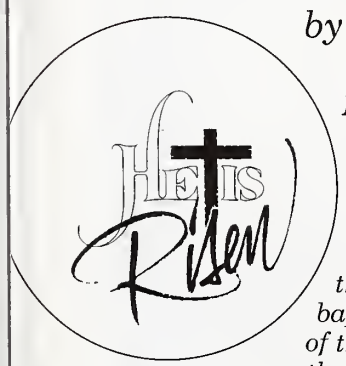
May we grasp the meaning of the resurrection for how we live today. And may God's strong Spirit help us to meet the conditions for the transformed life he came to make possible here and hereafter.

Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus—a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who lives in Harrisonburg, Va.—is a former speaker on the "Heart to Heart" radio program. She continues an active ministry today through newspaper essays and advertisements. She is currently completing a book of daily meditations based on her radio and newspaper messages.

The splinter in Matthew's gospel:

'Just because you have doubts does not mean you are excluded'

by Ryan Ahlgrim



Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." —Matt. 28:16-20

Last summer I trimmed back all the bushes in my backyard and cut out all the saplings and branches growing through the fences. When I was washing up, I noticed that it hurt every time I rubbed the end of my little finger. Upon closer inspection, I discovered a tiny splinter embedded in the tip of my finger—so small I could barely see it. I tried to pull it out with tweezers, but it was too deep. So I left it there, depending on nature to slowly work it out. But all week, every time I brushed the tip of my finger against something, I felt that little pain.

Every time I read the great commission in Matt. 28:16-20, I feel a little pain. A splinter is embedded in the passage, so small it is barely noticeable. Most people never see it.

The splinter is this: "but some doubted." The eleven disciples go back to a mountain in Galilee to which Jesus had instructed them to go. There they see Jesus—alive, risen from the dead! They fall on their knees and worship him. But some doubted.

This splinter is never removed—it is the last word about the disciples in Matthew's Gospel. Matthew does not say if the doubters ever change their minds or if they go to their deaths doubting that Jesus was among them.

Why did Matthew put that splinter in there? Would not the ending of Matthew's Gospel have been improved if he had just left out those three words—"but some doubted"?

Maybe Matthew admitted that some of the eleven disciples doubted because he felt obligated to tell the truth. Maybe he didn't leave out that detail because it was not only some of the original disciples who had doubts, but some of the Christians in Matthew's church had

It is hard to believe that Jesus is king of our world today. Yet Jesus turns to the doubters and says: 'Make my kingdom known. Turn people into my disciples.'

them as well. Perhaps Matthew wants to say to the people in his church, "Just because you have some doubts does not mean you are excluded from Christ's great commission. You are no different from those eleven disciples—some of them had doubts too. But Jesus still wanted them, and Jesus still wants you."

What exactly did some of the people in Matthew's church doubt? They apparently doubted that Jesus was alive, raised by God. But it may have been something even more specific than that. I think some people in Matthew's church doubted the very first thing Jesus said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

This statement is indeed hard to believe. It is one thing to believe that God may have somehow resuscitated someone, or that this person in some way lives on, but it is quite another thing to believe that this person now has all authority in heaven and earth. Some of the eleven disciples and Matthew's church members doubted that. And some of us in the church today doubt that as well. But the risen Jesus makes this incredible claim: I am now King of everything everywhere. I have all authority. My kingdom has now begun, and I reign over all.

Revelation mentions that Christ will have a thousand-year reign on earth, when the dragon and forces of evil are bound and thrown in a pit. But according to Matthew and Paul, the reign of Christ is *now*. The present age is not under the rule of Satan, nor is the king of this world some dark force. Jesus is the ruler.

His kingdom is not readily visible, and various forces rebel against his authority and reign. But even when certain factions are in rebellion, the King is still the King. Jesus is King because he has all the authority. Jesus does not use his authority to crush rebellion and coerce obedience. Jesus' authority is that of truth, goodness, and spiritual reality. These things will bring the rebellions to an end, and Jesus will be recognized as Lord of all.

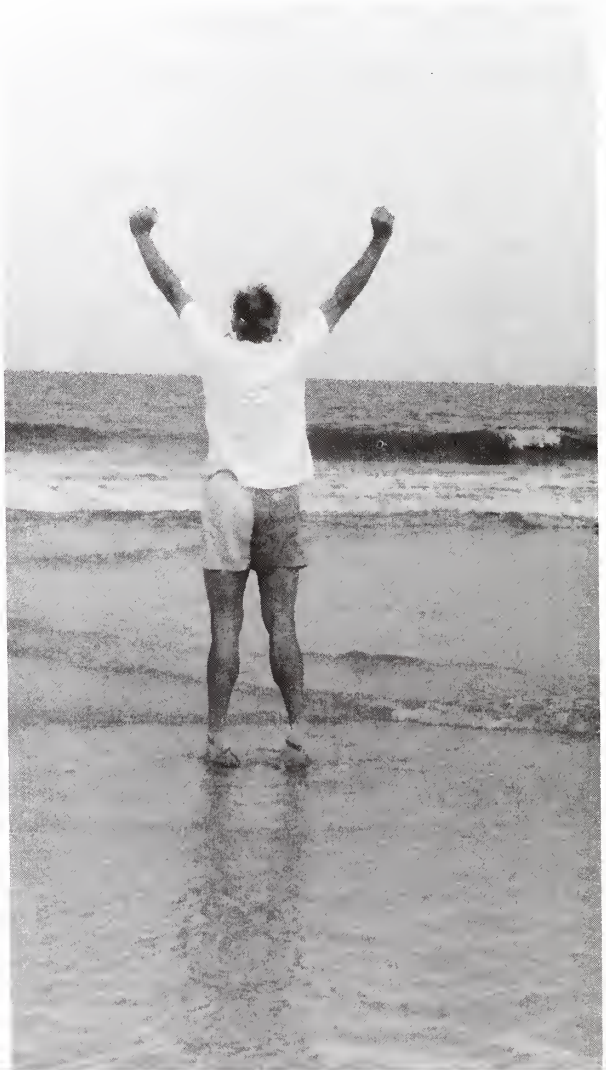
It is hard for me to believe that Jesus is King of this world. My first instinct is that money is king. For instance, about 90 percent of elections in the United States are won by the candidate who spends the most—not the candidate who is most intelligent, honest, or capable. Money runs world politics by determining which nations have power. Money is the physical basis of our continued existence.

But on a hilltop in Galilee, the risen Jesus tells a group of rough fishermen: "President Clinton isn't king of the world. Oil, economics, military, big business, money, evil—none of these is king of the world. . . . I'm king of the world."

And Jesus turns to the doubters and says: "I want you to make my kingdom known. I want you to overcome the rebellions by making people into my disciples. Conquer them with my teachings. Wash them with my baptism. Open their eyes to my truth, my goodness, my reality. And although it's hard to believe, I'm with you always, helping to make this happen, till the end of the age."

The splinter in Matthew's Gospel is a paradox, giving us pain but also giving us hope. Even with our doubts, Jesus Christ is still Lord of all.

Ryan Ahlgrim serves as pastor of First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, Ind.



Foundations for the future

Willard M. Swartley

Jesus spoke in a parable about foundations and alerted his followers to the opportunities and hazards of the future. To be sure, Jesus was not founding a seminary. But what he said is pertinent to preparing men and women to be leaders in ministry and mission.

Jesus taught about and called people to the reign of God. Rightly, the AMBS statement *Ministerial Formation and Theological Education in Mennonite Perspective* says, "Christian ministry finds its highest purpose in serving the church's calling to be the community of faith that witnesses...to God's reign as revealed in and through Jesus Christ."

Building on Christ for the church

Throughout their 50-year histories, a key concern of both Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Goshen Biblical Seminary (now AMBS) has been **building on the foundation, Jesus Christ.** I remember H.S. Bender, former dean of Goshen Biblical Seminary, explicating Matthew 16:16-19, telling future ministers that Peter is the rock on which the church is built, and we are living stones built into this church founded by Jesus Christ.

The 1992 theological statement of AMBS identifies the seminary and its curriculum as **church-based** in its structure and priorities, so the ministry for which AMBS prepares people signals the reign of God in the community headed by Jesus Christ.

Strong foundations

AMBS has been committed to **strong biblical foundations,** as the names of MBS and GBS indicate. The **Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition of faith** and understanding has also been strong, represented in the curriculum and contributions of the Institute of Mennonite Studies. Seeing **the community as a context for learning** has significantly

shaped pastoral education at AMBS. And the **international dimension** has been present in the composition of the student body and also in the experiences and perspectives of the faculty. These emphases continue.

At AMBS **worship** is essential in strengthening relationships to God, opening us to the shaping power of God's Spirit. "The wind blows where it will" and thus the "holy moments" come unannounced, through experiences we do not plan. In times of adversity, especially Marlin Miller's sudden death, we were forced to "raw trust," hardly able to speak, groping for the love and hope that overcomes the sting of death.

Preparing for the future

We have launched a new plan of study that prepares Master of Divinity students for ministry through coursework and supervised field education. We are strengthening the preaching component with more thorough and deliberate teaching and evaluation. Our Spiritual Formation program seeks to help each student deepen his or her spiritual life as the foundation for effective and faithful ministry.

Our present faculty, like those before it— building on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ—not only excels in teaching and writing, but also in serving the church in many additional ways—locally, binationally, and even internationally.

Beckoning horizons lie before us: growing summer school to serve a broader group of people, expanding conference-based leaning opportunities across the continent, summer institute in mission and evangelism, closer faculty-conference relationships, preparation for bi-vocational ministries.

These efforts build on the strengths of the past 50 years and establish new and strong foundations for the future—to strengthen the ways we work with and within the church to prepare people to serve God.

Willard M. Swartley is dean of AMBS and has taught New Testament at AMBS since 1978.

AMBS • Vision

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

50 years AMBS
Foundations for the future

Strong foundations:

A tradition of preparing workers for the church

1945: Mennonite Bibilical Seminary

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it," was the theme of A.S. Rosenberger's sermon at the opening of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, October 4, 1945. Rosenberger was pastor of Salem Church, Dalton, Ohio, and president of the seminary board.

Rosenberger concluded, "We have every confidence that out of this institution will go young men and young women whom the Lord can use in a real and vital way. We humbly pray God may use this institution for this great purpose."

General Conference Mennonite Church efforts in theological education had begun in the 1860s. Building on these earlier efforts, MBS was established in 1945 in affiliation with Bethany Theological Seminary in Chicago. This cooperation gave the fledgling MBS a solid start.

From 1945-1951, MBS purchased several properties on Woodlawn Avenue, creating a "campus" with offices, apartments, a library, and a worship center for the seminary.

Woodlawn Mennonite Church on South Woodlawn Avenue was the "Christian life center" for MBS in Chicago and became an opportunity for outreach into the surrounding community.

1946: Goshen Biblical Seminary

Goshen College, founded in 1894, nurtured a strong Bible department which, like its other departments, was called a "school." From this emerged Goshen Biblical Seminary.

Under Dean Harold S. Bender,the Bible School established a rigorous curriculum with faculty who were leaders in the church.

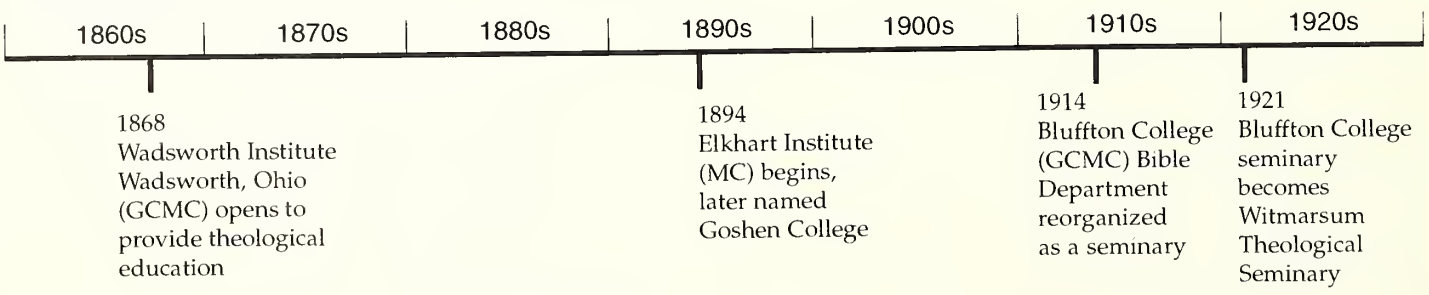
Graduate level work was first offered in 1933, and in 1942 a five-year bachelor of theology program began in cooperation with Hesston (Kan.) College.

The name changed to "Goshen College Biblical Seminary" in 1946, thus creating the first seminary of the Mennonite Church. A seminary building on the college campus was dedicated in 1959 with GBS continunig under the umbrella of Goshen College for another ten years.

Bender, in his 1946-47 annual report, wrote, "Our calling as a training school for Christian workers is to move forward with the church in its expanding program and furnish more and better workers for its activities."

Lettering above the pulpit in the GBS chapel announced, "Jesus is Lord." As worshippers walked out, they were encouraged to "Go therefore and make disciples."

AMBS timeline



AMBS 50 years
Foundations for the future

1958: Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

"Tuesday, Sept. 3 [1957], was a day of historic significance for Mennonites of North America," reported *Mennonite Weekly Review*, as ground was broken in Elkhart, Ind., for AMBS.

Initially the Elkhart campus housed MBS, the AMBS library and the offices of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, with joint GBS-MBS classes occurring only two afternoons a week. Once begun, cooperation gained momentum with AMBS becoming one seminary in 1993.

Ross T. Bender, who served as dean for 15 years, commented in a 1964 *Goshen College Bulletin:* "We feel that it is the Lord who is leading us and bringing us together." Looking back almost 30 years later, Bender said, "There would not be talk of integration in the church now if there had not been several decades of pastors studying together. AMBS is like the point of the plow that prepared the soil for cooperation in many areas."

At the time of AMBS's 25th anniversary, Erland Waltner, president of MBS from 1958-78, reflected on the pioneering cooperative effort : "We have all learned that cooperation, whether in theological education or in any other area of service, does not come easily. . . . It requires some readiness to take initiative, to take risks. It calls for mutual respect at every level. . . . In short, it calls for obedience to God who sent Jesus in order that we might understand our oneness with God and with each other in the community of faith and discipleship. It is indeed, nothing less than a gift of God and a work of the Holy Spirit among us."

AMBS mission statement

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is an inter-Mennonite educational community:

- *grounded in the Scriptures,*
- *committed to the Anabaptist heritage, and*
- *dedicated to the Christian church's calling in today's world.*

AMBS seeks to educate and enable men and women to become:

- *spiritually mature,*
- *theologically informed and discerning,*
- *practically qualified, and*
- *ethically committed*

ministers of the church of Jesus Christ.

(1988 abbreviated statement)

The Administrative Committee of AMBS guided the initial cooperative efforts: Erland Waltner, S.F. Pannabecker, Harold S. Bender, and Paul Mininger.

Buildings are not the most important element of a seminary, but they do help to define the institution. The Sermon on the Mount Chapel is AMBS's most identifiable structure and is the hub of worship life for the seminary.

1930s

1931 Witmarsum seminary closes

1933 Goshen College offers four-year B.Th. degree

1940s

1945 Mennonite Biblical Seminary (GCMC) founded in Chicago

1946 Goshen College Bible School named Biblical Seminary

1950s

1954 First joint MBS-GBS summer session

1958 MBS moves to Elkhart; AMBS is launched as joint classes begin on Elkhart campus

1960s

1962 Ross T. Bender appointed as dean of both MBS and GBS

1967-1968 Dean's Seminar: study of distinctive contribution of Free Church tradition to theological education

1970s

1969 GBS moves to Elkhart campus

1980s

1990s

1990 Marlin E. Miller becomes first joint AMBS president

1993 AMBS incorporated as one seminary

President's Window

Fifty years ago the Mennonite Church and the General Conference each felt the need for more trained church workers. Their answer was Goshen Biblical Seminary on the grounds of Goshen College, and Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago. More than 2,000 men and women have studied at these two schools, and their successor, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Much has changed in these fifty years, most obviously in society and culture. Television, unheard of when the seminaries began, has become the primary means of mass communication. The populace has both become more urban and less rooted in the communities where they were raised. Agricultural and manufacturing jobs have decreased as service occupations, technical positions and unemployment have increased. Education levels have risen dramatically. The sense that the people of Canada and United States were one has been proven an illusion through intense political struggle over social issues, and the presence of many minority groups.

We Mennonites often consider ourselves somewhat separate from society, and yet each of these changes has entered our communities with full force—with positive, negative or mixed effect. Some small steps have been taken so that our church might reflect the ethnic mix of our setting. Salaried ministerial leadership, although far from universal, has become common. The controversies of our day are frequently mirrored in our churches, sometimes with little obviously Christian content. Our Mennonite church continues to need well prepared leaders, but the world and church in which they will work has changed in these fifty years.

Here is the central challenge of AMBS—to remain faithful to its mandate of preparing church workers whose foundation is Christ and Scripture, with the recognition that as society and church evolve, the preparation required also changes. In other words, true fidelity to the original call requires change. In the process, however, AMBS must avoid the all too common tendency of college or seminary to drift away from the church. It must stay in constant touch with the church in order to remain sensitive to its needs. In the early 1990s AMBS revised its curriculum in an effort to orient itself more fully toward the church. But this is a never ending task. As AMBS celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, we recommits ourselves to this mission. May the prayer vigil of the anniversary weekend serve this end.

- Gerald Gerbrant, Interim President

FALL SEMESTER WEEKEND COURSE

Anabaptist History & Theology

Details:
Three-credit-hour course meets four weekends during fall semester, Friday evening through Saturday afternoon

Contact the AMBS registrar, Ruth Ann Gardner
Telephone: 219 296-6213
E-mail: RAGAMBS@aol.com

AMBS Panorama

Record turn-out

Fifty people participated in the spring Seminary Sampler, an open house at AMBS for people exploring the possibility of seminary study. March 3-4 was packed with a welcoming coffeehouse evening, two sample class periods, tours, time for questions and answers, and meals with faculty and students. Strong support and encouragement from several Mennonite colleges helped to boost the turn-out.

Interterm 1997

Offerings during next interterm, January 6-24, 1997, are:
Isaiah with Ben Ollenburger, Hymnology with Mary Oyer, , Christian Attitudes Toward War, Peace and Revolution with Ted Koontz, Youth Ministry (instructor to be named), and Premarital and Marital Counseling (instructor to be named).

Two special study tours are offered in connection with the World Conference in India: The Gospel in Cultures (Middle East and India) with Jacob Elias, and Current Issues in Mission and Theological Education (Europe and former Soviet Union) with Walter Sawatsky.

Pastors' Week 1997

"Story Shaping Faith: The Power of Story in Ministry" is the theme of Pastors' Week, January 27-31, 1997.

Come to learn about the power of stories in many different ministry settings—preaching, counseling, congregational life, family life, and Christian education. Come also to learn from and enjoy storiesof Mennonites from the past and from the around the world today.

Visit our home page

An AMBS home page on the World Wide Web introduces people to our programs and our faculty and includes a listing of summer school courses, e-mail addresses of faculty and staff, and recent news releases. You can find it at:
http://members.aol.com/mennosem/home.htm

Ron Sider at AMBS

"Would Jesus join the Christian Coalition?" Ron Sider asked in a presentation to AMBS students and area residents on March 14.

The president of Evangelicals for Social Action and minister in the Lancaster Mennonite Conference is concerned that Christians too quickly jump to conclusions without "doing their homework."

Opposed to one-issue politics, he said God cares about the family, the poor, the oppressed, creation, and many other issues. Christians must work toward the balance of concerns that they see in the Scriptures.

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

Editor and designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos: Page 1, J. Tyler Klassen; page 3 (chapel), Howard Zehr; others, file photos

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Illinois Conference does not oust two churches; recommendation fails by three delegate votes

Metamora, Ill.—How does a conference commemorate 75 years of history? By voting to continue fellowshipping with each other—but barely.

When it gathered at the Metamora Mennonite Church on Mar. 29-30, Illinois Mennonite Conference faced "the hardest issue ever to come before this conference," according to president Calvin Kaufman, pastor of the East Bend Mennnonite Church, Fisher. That issue was what to do about two congregations that do not make homosexual practice a test of membership—a policy that runs counter to that of the conference and of the broader church.

The two congregations are Oak Park (Ill.) with a membership of 45 and Maple Avenue, Waukesha, Wis., with 35 members.

'It fails.' What action to take had been discussed at length at the conference's 1995 session. Delegates there passed a statement that said "homosexual sexual activity is a sin." They also asked the conference executive committee to take the steps necessary to bring a recommendation to the 1996 meeting on "whether the Oak Park and Maple Avenue congregations can continue . . . in the Illinois Mennonite Conference."

The recommendation which the executive committee drafted noted there had been no indication the two churches were changing their positions. "Therefore, we discontinue membership of the two congregations in the Illinois Mennonite Conference effective Oct. 1, 1996, unless these congregations notify the executive committee . . . they are changing their practices to be congruent with the IMC position regarding homosexuality."

Out of 153 delegates at the session, 98 (65%) voted for the recommendation and 53 (35%) voted against. Two delegates abstained. Conference constitution called for a two-thirds (66.6%) majority for a resolution of this kind. "It fails," Kaufman announced to a hushed audience.

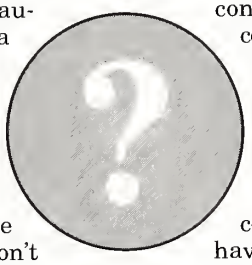
Congregational stories. Discussion of the recommendation began with representatives from both churches telling how they arrived at their positions.

Nancy Myers, chair of Oak Park, said her congregation began studying the issue after a gay person asked about membership. "We found we disagreed on many things," she said, "but on two things we did agree: (1) we should not be judges; (2) this issue would not be a basis of membership."

Myers noted that "we came to this decision in 1989 and wanted to do so quietly." That changed in 1992, Myers said, when representatives from the congregation were asked to speak on the subject of homosexuality at an Illinois Conference gathering, and "that was the beginning of the intense time of turmoil that has brought us to this point."

Intense discussion. "For our congregation, this was a justice issue," said Marie Fonz, an elder at Maple Avenue. The congregation spoke in defense of Oak Park at the 1995 session and at the same time told the delegates they also had gay and lesbian members.

The discussion that followed was intense. It ranged from how to interpret the Bible to the eternal destiny of homosexual persons to the authority of a conference over a congregation.



"The Bible does not need an interpretation because there needs to be no discussion," said Juan Ferreras of Sonido de Alabanza, Cicero, through an interpreter. "The Anabaptists said that you don't discuss the Bible; you believe it. As Anabaptists we should be ashamed of ourselves for taking so much time to discuss something that is so clear in the Word."

"But this vote is not in favor of or against homosexuality," said Jeff Yordy of North Suburban Mennonite Church, Mundelein. "There are a wide variety of opinions on this issue in my church. But one thing my church is very clear on is that we do not kick out churches that interpret the Bible differently than we do."

Evelyn Bertsche of the Mennonite Church of Normal asked for permission to put a substitute resolution before the delegates. It would have allowed "full membership" for the two congregations while not endorsing their positions. Discussion stalled while leaders considered proper procedure.

After a telephone consultation during a break with Al Albrecht, Goshen, Ind.—who has served as parliamentarian for Mennonite General Assembly—the executive committee asked if delegates wanted to discuss the substitute resolution. The vote was no. Also defeated was a call for a five-year moratorium on actions to dismiss congregations from the conference.

Feelings ran high after the vote on the executive committee's recommendation was announced. A voice from the audience called for the singing of "Unity" from *Sing and Rejoice.*

"How can we sing when we do not have unity?" asked Terry Rogers of Pleasant Hill Mennonite, East Peoria. Dropping his Bible to the bench, he asked, "What do I tell my congregation about this thing? That we have no boundaries?"

A chorus of "no's" came from the audience.

"Those of you who are discouraged by this vote, don't make hasty decisions about your future relationship with this conference," Kaufman pleaded. As the conference ended, rumors circulated about how many and which congregations would leave the conference because the recommendation had not passed.

"I appeal to you that we all stay together," said Edwin Stalter, veteran conference leader and retired minister with the Flanagan congregation. "I pray that we have patience, that we have vision, and that we work with our denomination to come through this."

Other events. Though the issue of homosexuality overshadowed the session, Illinois Conference did have other business. They welcomed two congregations—Trinity New Life, Henry, and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Chicago—as full members. Delegates also learned another congregation, Dewey, had withdrawn from conference.

Guest speaker for the sessions was Bill Detweiler, Kidron, Ohio, pastor emeritus of the Kidron Mennonite Church and speaker on the Calvary Hour radio program.

"We need to hold convictions strongly, but we need not hold them arrogantly," Detweiler said. "Humility is the hallmark of authenticity in the kingdom." Detweiler also noted gentleness and nobility as characteristics of members of God's kingdom.

To celebrate 75 years of history, the assembly also spent an hour before Detweiler's presentation on Friday night singing hymns from their past and from their current traditions.

"God, we ask for guidance and wisdom . . . as we work toward unity," Glen Horner, conference minister, prayed near the close of the session.

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Mennonite health workers discuss role of congregations in well-being of members

Schaumburg, Ill. (Mennonite Weekly Review)—Amid a culture in which people seemingly leave their well-being to someone or something else, Ardean Friesen sees the congregation as the place to encourage responsibility.

"We don't take initiative for our own health," he said at the annual Mennonite Health Assembly held here March 21-24. "We expect that to be taken care of for us. And that's something that can be changed at the local level."

Health involves emotions. Meanwhile, Rick Stiffney wants more elements of the congregation—its ability to share concerns, celebrate joys, and offer support—brought to those entities the church has created to provide health services. "Something of our congregational talk needs to become more dominant in our institutional talk."

Friesen and Stiffney were among the presenters at the conference, which drew about 350 people from Canada and the United States. Participants represented various capacities of health care: doctors, nurses, chaplains, pastors, mental health workers, social workers, and those who work with people with disabilities.

The diversity in assembly attendance was reflected in the offerings, such as workshops on "Birthing and Growing a Home Services Agency" and "Humor in Health Care," seminars on dementia and children's needs, and meetings of chaplains, nurses, and trustees.

Friesen, a nurse and former chair of Kern Road Mennonite Church's (South Bend, Ind.) wholistic health committee, presented a workshop on the church's health program. He said that conventional health care approaches are more akin to "the business of sick care."

"Health has to do with how we work and play, our feelings and emotions," Friesen said.

Martin E. Marty, professor at University of Chicago Divinity School, gives an address at a plenary session at the March 21-24 Mennonite Health Assembly.

The wholistic health committee in his congregation sponsors six to eight events a year, such as health fairs, flu shots, living will instruction, mental health seminars, and assertiveness training.

"[Church members] feel they are living healthier than they used to," Friesen said. "They feel they have been encouraged to take better care of their bodies and their spirituality."

Stiffney's workshop, "Healing and Hope: Perspectives from Church-Related Health Care," was based on the *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement adopted by the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church last year. Stiffney, a vice-president at Greencroft Retirement Community in Goshen, Ind., was on the committee that drew up the statement.

"I kept asking myself, 'What does this vision mean, not so much for my congregation but for the institutions of the church?' " he said.

Leaders who know their frailties. Stiffney described sharing times during worship services in which members share about illness and death as well as healing and life, contrasting it to health care institutions. "When was the last time in our board meetings we used healing and hope to describe what's happening to somebody?" he asked.

"Our organizations will nurture healing help as they have leaders who . . . know the meaning of their own woundedness, their own frailties."

—Rich Preheim

Hondurans renew work against military service

Washington, D.C. (NISBCO)—The sigh of relief that Hondurans breathed last May when their Congress ratified a constitutional amendment establishing a voluntary military service has become an anxious gasp. The government recently unveiled a new law proposal designed to implement the constitutional change, and it has critics of the military alarmed.

Disguised form of old law. Oscar Duenas Paz, president of the peace and justice committee of the Honduran Evangelical Mennonite Church, told the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO) that "we obtained a copy of the new military service law proposal and discovered that it contains nothing about voluntary military service. It is simply a disguised form of the same old obligatory service."

Colonel Mario David Villanueva, spokesperson for the Honduran armed forces, recently called for immediate approval of the new law, noting that many of the military units are without soldiers. The military's pleas draw little sympathy from most Hondurans, after years of forced recruitment, disappearances, and other human rights violations.

The new law proposal allows for a military draft "in duly qualified cases." It is certain that a lack of volunteers would qualify as justification for a draft. Current estimates are that the Honduran military is operating with fewer than 50 percent of allocated troops. A similar crisis led to a lottery-style draft in November 1994, when nearly 6,000 Hondurans were conscripted.

Daryl Yoder-Bontrager, Honduras country representative for Mennonite Central Committee, reports that the Civic, Christian, and Popular Movement is gearing up to challenge the proposal. It appears that Mennonite education efforts on the importance of conscientious objection are bearing fruit, he says.

In a recent gathering of the Civic, Christian, and Popular Movement, Yoder-Bontrager says that "many people mentioned how important it is to have conscientious objection included in the new law. And that was before the Mennonite delegation even had a chance to talk."

Elderly Kansan helps Old Colony Mennonites in resettlement process

Liberal, Kan. (MCC)—At Evelyn Lambert's age, most church workers have completed their ministry and settled down to take it easy for their remaining years.

But this rural Kismet, Kan., resident's outreach to Old Colony Mennonite families migrating from Mexico is just now hitting the high-water mark.

Lambert, 78, was one of the founders of Liberal's Et Cetera Shop in 1978, and helped manage it for eight years. The shop sells Selfhelp Crafts of the World items and secondhand clothes to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee.

And over the years, she and her husband, Harold, who died last June, have taken in 22 foster children. With such a full life, no one could have faulted her had she decided her days of active service were over.

Call to a new ministry. But God called Lambert to a new ministry, she feels. While her congregation, Calvary Mennonite Church, might have 30 to 40 adults attend on a Sunday, the children's Sunday school is bursting at the seams. As many as 27 children, mostly Old Colony, show up regularly.

The Lamberts first began reaching out to Old Colony Mennonites about 20 years ago, when people from this group began passing through the Liberal area and working as migrant laborers on nearby farms. Through their contacts with Old Colony Mennonites, the Lamberts began to understand more about their culture and strong group identification.

Resettling in Kansas. In recent years, as economic conditions soured in Mexico and the colonies there, Mennonite families began arriving in Kansas to settle. Many of them are poor, with little education, and spiritually uncertain after being separated from the community that had previously defined their faith.

Meanwhile, Calvary was down to two children in Sunday school. The Lamberts saw an opportunity to minister to the Old Colonists' spiritual needs and at the same time revitalize their church's Sunday school. Calvary was initially reluctant to get involved, so the Lamberts continued on their own initiative—and their own expense. With no church of their own, Old Colonists only meet every few weeks when a traveling Old Colony minister comes through. There is no children's Sunday school, so children were and are the main focus of the Lamberts' outreach.

As they became acquainted with the families, Lamberts would suggest the children attend Sunday school to learn about Jesus and the Bible. Evelyn used every opportunity she had to meet new families, using whatever excuses she could find to visit. Harold and Evelyn would themselves pick up all the children each Sunday and take them to church. Today, others help out, as 20-plus children won't fit into one car.

Lambert's devotion to the children has extended beyond Sunday mornings, as she plans numerous special events for them, including birthday parties, games, and Easter egg hunts. Recently she brought 12 of the older children to the Et Cetera Shop to help sort and hang clothes for a day. "For those children, it was an introduction to volunteer work, to mission; they knew they were helping other people, and they didn't want to go home!" says Ervey Unruh, pastor of Calvary.

On the third Sunday that a child is in Sunday school, he or she gets a

Evelyn Lambert

Bible; before this, none of them have ever had one, Lambert says. "They are so thrilled, they bring them every morning once they have them. They soak up verses like sponges."

Over time, Calvary has come to support Lambert's ministry. "When you have someone excited about something, and making it work, that gets others on board," says pastor Unruh. "Evelyn was presented with something she feels God is calling her to do—that's a ministry," he says.—*Chris Huebert Stauffer*

Artisans' homes restored. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Members of Halima Handicrafts, pictured above, found themselves "in a desperate position" recently when many of their homes were damaged by a severe cyclone. Additionally, finished needlework projects that had been shipped to a firm in British Columbia were sitting in a warehouse unsold. As news of the disaster spread, the Global Village store in British Columbia and Selfhelp Crafts U.S., a nonprofit program of Mennonite Central Committee, provided money to help them rebuild. In a recent letter, Halima Handicrafts director Abdur Rahman Sarker reports that the $1,500 (U.S.) helped restore housing for 41 families in the northwestern district of Dinajpur.

Today more than 200 women earn badly needed income by marketing their needlework through Halima Handicrafts. Most of the women are either widows or abandoned by their husbands and have no other employment options. The group also works to provide basic education for members' children.—*Larry Guengerich*

Mennonites approach defense contractor

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Lancaster County is home to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which is trying to clear cluster bombs strewn in the Laotian countryside some 25 years ago by U.S. military forces.

The county is also home to Bulova Technologies Inc., whose products include components for cluster bombs and land mines. Once primarily a defense contractor, Bulova Technologies has recently entered the telecommunications and semiconductor fields as well.

MCC U.S., MCC East Coast, Lancaster Mennonite Conference, and the Atlantic Coast Conference of the Mennonite Church decided to approach Bulova Technologies with their concerns.

Conferences take action. In a letter to Bulova Technologies, the Lancaster Conference's peace and social concerns commission wrote, "We seek to be peacemakers and renounce the use of violence. . . . Cluster bombs are very indiscriminate weapons, frequently causing injury and death to noncombatants, even after a war is over. We fear that Bulova Technologies' production of cluster bomb components will add to the suffering that people in war-torn areas already experience."

The peace committee of the Atlantic Coast Conference has encouraged individual members to write letters expressing their concerns to Bulova Technologies.

"Clearing cluster bombs and other antipersonnel weapons is important, but clearance alone is not an adequate solution," says Titus Peachey, co-coordinator of MCC U.S. peace and justice ministries. "We need to talk about the humanitarian concerns related to continued production and export of antipersonnel weapons. Working at the governmental level to ban antipersonnel weapons is one approach. Making direct contact with local producers is another."

Recent legislation. Peachey agrees Bulova Technologies provides valuable jobs to Lancaster. "By converting to commercial products, Bulova Technologies can continue this service without contributing to the tragedy antipersonnel weapons bring to people around the world," he says.

Although 100,000 land mines were cleared in 1993, an additional 2 million were laid that same year. Recent legislation establishing a U.S. moratorium on land mine use and export—to take effect in 1999 for a year's duration—does not apply to cluster bombs.—*Emily Will*

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Taking some responsibility. *Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)*—"So what's a white guy doing leading an antiracism workshop?" Jody Miller Shearer asked a group recently at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). His response? "Racism is a problem for which white people need to take responsibility." Miller Shearer, staff associate on racism awareness for Mennonite Central Committee, led a one-day workshop for 50 people on personal and societal racism. He illustrated racism as a tree; people often respond to racism by "snipping off the branches of language or hate groups" without dealing with the roots of racism. "If we deal only with the questions of interpersonal dynamics of racism, we miss the larger systemic reality of racism which is rooted in power," Miller Shearer said.

- ***Global Gods* named finalist.** *Global Gods: Exploring the Role of Religions in Modern Societies* by David W. Shenk of Lancaster, Pa., is a finalist in the 1996 Gold Medallion Awards of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. The book compares world religions and ideologies. It is published by Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa. Winners of the award will be announced in ceremonies in Anaheim, Calif., in July.

- **Group Venture breaks record.** More youth groups than ever before have applied to Group Venture, the short-term service and learning program coordinated by Mennonite Board of Missions. A record 60 applications have been received in the past six months, compared with a previous high of 50 applications in all of 1994. Group Venture is a cooperative program of MBM and the General Conference Commission on Home Ministries, Newton, Kan.

- **Home makes settlement.** Menno Haven, Chambersburg, Pa., has announced that it reached a settlement agreement with the trustee for the estate of the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy. The retirement home will return $1,718,250 to the estate, representing the net gain in matching funds distributed by the foundation to Menno Haven. Numerous organizations who gained money from the charity scam are voluntarily returning funds to assist those organizations who lost money in the foundation.

- **Principal resigns.** Bert Lobe, principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont., has announced his resignation. He will end his tenure on Aug. 31 after seven years at Rockway. Lobe will become assistant principal at the Hong Kong International School.

- **EMU board meets.** The board of trustees of Eastern Mennonite University approved a preliminary operating budget of $18.4 million for the 1996-97 school year—a 10.7 percent increase over this year. In the March 22-23 meeting, the board also honored Lee F. Snyder, vice-president and academic dean, and David F. Miller, vice-president for advancement, who are both leaving the university this spring.

- **House building begins.** Manitoba's first House Against Hunger project began with a ground-breaking ceremony and prayer of dedication on March 16. The house, southeast of Winnipeg, will be sold to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee. Project coordinator Victor Derksen expects the house to be completed by the end of May.

- **Church changes name.** The Mennonite Fellowship of San Diego, member of the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference, has changed its name to San Diego Mennonite Church.

- **This space available.** *Gospel Herald* publishes job openings, coming events, new resources, and other notices in this section free of charge to Mennonite-related institutions. Selected items are printed one time only and are edited to follow a standard format. Announcements for coming events should be sent at least three weeks in advance of the date. Send items to 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683.

- **Coming events:**

Connecting Families, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., April 12-14. Led by Chuck Boyer, psycologist and pastor of LaVerne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren. More information available from 800 839-1021.

Choir festival concert of Mennonite Secondary Education Council, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, April 13-14. Features a 500-voice choir of students from 13 Mennonite high schools from Canada, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. More information available from 717 299-0436.

Faithful and Successful Leadership, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. One-day seminar led by Mennonite consultant Lee Schmucker. More information available from 800 839-1021.

Spring banquet of Mennonite Information Center, Berlin, Ohio, April 26. Walter Beachey from Rosedale Bible Institute will speak on "Stewards of a Godly Heritage." Reservations available from 330 893-3192.

Spiritual life and prophecy conference, Hammer Creek Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa., April 26-28. Sponsored by the *Sword and Trumpet* board. Guest speaker is Robert Wiley, Jr., dean of academic affairs at Lancaster Bible College. More information available from Fred Heller at 717 626-2649.

Graduation exercises, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., April 27. John P. Williams, Jr., general superintendent of the Evangelical Friends Church—Eastern Region, will give the address, "God's Glorious Inequity."

Spring nature weekend, Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa., May 10-12. Leaders are Karl Leitzel, wildlife artist; Bob Eriksen, naturalist and speaker; and Owen Owens, director of ecology and racial is-

sues with the American Baptist Church. Reservations available from 717 595-7505.

Church-related institutions multidisciplinary conference, Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, June 13-15. Offers practical, historical, and theoretical perspectives for administrators, trustees, observers, and students of church-related institutions. Speakers include Alice Roth, Herman Bontrager, Ted Koontz, and Lee Snyder. Registration deadline is May 15. More information from 717 361-1443.

• **New books:**

Bathsheba is the eighth book in "People of the Promise" series of biblical novels by James R. Shott. Tells the story of the royal family and kingdom of Israel through the eyes of Bathsheba, wife of King David. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

• **Job openings:**

Assistant director of visitor exchange programs, Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa. Two-year position available in May. Qualifications include experience in overseas living, working with young North American and international adults, and communication and administrative skills. Contact Dwight McFadden at 717 859-1151.

Carpenters and cooks, Serving with Appalachian People (SWAP) program of Mennonite Central Committee, Kentucky. Assignments last from May 26-Aug. 16. Applications are due April 19. More information from Janet Weber at 717 859-3889.

Executive and development director, Williamsburg (Va.) Christian Retreat Center. Responsibilities include overall administrative responsibilities with focus on development activities. Send résumé or inquiries to Joe Longacher, 1502 Chauncey Lane, Richmond, VA 23233.

Physical education positions, Goshen (Ind.) College. Two openings begin in July. Each position combines coaching of one or two sports (women's basketball, volleyball, softball, or tennis) with teaching and administrative responsibilities. Send résumé and three professional references to John D. Nyce, interim academic dean, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

School counseling and guidance position, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College. Begins Aug. 15. Doctorate or nearly completed degree in the field desired. Full description and application available from Howard J. Loewen, 209 453-2023.

Philadelphia YES teams leave. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Nine Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions left North America in January for service assignments in nine countries. Members of four of those teams spent three months in training in the YES Center in Philadelphia, Pa. They are:

Front row *(left to right)*: Edi Binuko to Indonesia; Ryan Kauffman, Mexico team leader; Tim Steiner to Honduras; Jenelle Burkhart to Honduras; Wendell Nofziger, Honduras team leader.

Second row: Krista Stauffer to Honduras; Amy Swanson; Mindi Horst to Honduras; Otoniel Soto to Mexico; Jenelle Bender to Indonesia; Lisa Good, Indonesia team leader; Retno Budiyanti to Indonesia.

Third row: Angie Hunsberger, Sweden team leader; Beth Kauffman to Sweden; Megan Heisey to Sweden; Mandy Kipe to Mexico; Tonya Zehr to Honduras; Heidi Hershberger to Honduras; Lena Suydam to Mexico.

Back row: Troy Hoover to Sweden; Dan Mongeau to Sweden; Matt Yoder to Indonesia; Seth Hankee to Mexico; Amiee Wright to Mexico; Tina Yost to Mexico.

NEW MEMBERS

Bethel, Rittman, Ohio: Laura Landis, Shannon Geiser, and Karon Oliver.

Harris Hill, Williamsville, N.Y.: Bonnie Krabill, Ron Augsburger, Carol Ferguson, Thomas Waters, Keith Krabill, Kerry Lawandus, David Waters, Lee Reiser, and Joel Hasselbeck.

Harrisonburg, Va.: Laura Berkey.

Kern Road, South Bend, Ind.: Dan Scarsella and Suzanne Hertzler.

Zion, Hubbard, Ore.: Tara Lyn Hershberger.

MARRIAGES

Clemmer-Gahman: Jennifer Shawn Clemmer, Green Lane, Pa. (Salford), and Robert Duane Gahman, Quakertown, Pa., March 23, by James C. Longacre.

Derstine-Newton: Jeremy Derstine, Bridgewater Corners, Vt. (Bethany), and Karensa Newton, Cortland, N.Y. (Free Methodist), Dec. 30, by Vern Groves.

Garges-Souder: Marian Garges, Harleysville, Pa. (Upper Skippack), and Gerald Souder, Telford, Pa. (Finland), March 3, by Rich Lewman.

Hathaway-Stutzman: Reba Hathaway, Kalona, Iowa (Lower Deer Creek), and Mitch Stutzman, Albany, Ore. (Albany), Feb. 3, by George Hansen.

BIRTHS

Ester-Bode, Michelle Brenneman and Ulf, Indianapolis, Ind., Drew Alexandra (first child), Feb. 26.

Goshow, Keila Landis and Michael, Hatfield, Pa., Micah Logan (third child), Feb. 27.

Hughes, Sherri Roth and David, Schwenksville, Pa., Michaiah Nichole (first child), March 16.

Hunsberger, Connie Anders and Galen, Schwenksville, Pa., Logan Anders (third child), March 5.

Kauffman, Deb Marner and Clint, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Samantha Lynn (first child),

'Except ye become.' *Harrisonburg, Va.*—Edward B. Stoltzfus, interim member of the pastoral team at Parkview Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., uses stuffed animals "Tim" and "Joanna" during a children's time on Sunday morning. Every week Stoltzfus employs the cloth critters in interpreting stories about Jesus' encounters with children on a young child's level and relating them to the overall worship theme. Stoltzfus invites the children to take the animals home each week and return them for the next story time. The series began in mid-January and continues through at least Easter Sunday.—*Jim Bishop*

March 17.

O'Krafka, Carolyn Weber and Harold, New Hamburg, Ont., Jacob Alfred (first child), March 9.

Roggie, Julie Yousey and Myron, Castorland, N.Y., Elissa Joy (first child), March 9.

Roth, Sarah Conklin and Tyler, Mishawaka, Ind., Emma Elizabeth (first child), March 13.

Schrock, Sherry and P. R., Wellman, Iowa, Spencer Reed (second child), March 7.

Vincent, Carrie Jo and George, Canby, Ore., Joanna Marianne (second child), Feb. 13.

Yoder, Linda Meck and Kevin, Harrisonburg, Va., Aaron Meck (third child), March 11.

DEATHS

Beck, Evelyn Ruth, 75, Peabody, Kan. Born: June 17, 1920, to Lester and Mary Beck. Died: March 10, 1996, Newton, Kan. Survivors—brother: Harold. Funeral: March 14, Whitestone Mennonite Church, by Ronald Guengerich and Louise Wideman. Burial: Eastlawn Cemetery.

Detwiler, Elizabeth "Betty" J. McNeilly, 75, Goshen, Ind. Born: Jan. 8, 1921, Monroeville, Pa., to Samuel and Della Ruth Shannon McNeilly. Died: March 17, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—sons: Thomas, Mark; sister: Eleanor Wergin; 5 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: John William Detwiler (husband). Funeral and burial: March 20, Pleasant View Mennonite Church, by Ron Diener and John Troyer.

Frey, Katie Viola Rhodes, 94, Kalona, Iowa. Born: July 23, 1901, Johnson County, Iowa, to Chriss J. and Eliza Gingerich Rhodes. Died: March 13, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—brothers and sister: Emery, Eldon, and John Rhodes, Alta Marner; 2 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Fred Frey (husband) and Mary Lou (daughter). Funeral and burial: March 16, East Union Mennonite Church, by Noah Helmuth and David L. Yoder.

Hollinger, Melvin L., 74. Born: June 15, 1921, Lampeter, Pa., to Mahlon and Kate Lemon Hollinger. Died: Feb. 19, 1996, Lititz, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Lois Witmer Hollinger; children: Donald, Robert, Daniel, Richard, Barbara Kilgro, Dorothy Finch; brothers and sisters: Lloyd, Clair, Ruth, Kay, Elma Spangler, Mary Hostetter; 14 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Feb. 22, New Providence Mennonite Church, by Paul Dagen, Robert Harnish, and Kenneth Hershey.

Schmidt, Vernon Henry, 83, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: March 24, 1912, Harper, Kan., to Samuel and Alice Shupe Schmidt. Died: March 12, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—wife: Clara Hale Schmidt; children: Wayne, Joy Pople, Louise Perlowitz; stepsons: Ted Glazner, Jerry Hale; brother and sisters: Earl, Ruth Hershberger, Edna Curtiss; 4 grandchildren, 6 step-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Sara Histand Schmidt (first wife). Funeral: March 16, Park View Mennonite Church, by Owen Burkholder and James Kite. Burial: Lindale Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Schrock, Ora D., 85, Burr Oak, Mich. Born: Oct. 23, 1910, Shelbyville, Ill., by Daniel and Celesta Mast Schrock. Died: March 9, 1996, Kalamazoo, Mich., of pneumonia. Survivors—wife: Berneice Troyer Schrock; children: Phyllis Hooley, Martha Wickey, Lloyd, Robert; 9 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ora and Orene (infant twin daughters). Funeral: March 12, Locust Grove Mennonite Church, by Jay Ulrich and Clint Zehr. Burial: Shore Cemetery.

He pastored South Colon Mennonite Church for 10 years.

Schweitzer, Harold, 83, Cairo, Neb. Born: Feb. 13, 1913, Shickley, Neb., to Samuel and Fannie Troyer Schweitzer. Died: March 4, 1996, Grand Island, Neb. Survivors—children: Jerry, Rose Lantham; sisters: Mattie Stutzman, Elma Stutzman; 13 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Florence Stutzman Schweitzer (wife), Ruth Buettner (daughter), and three infant children. Funeral: March 8, Wood River Mennonite Church, by Denton Jantzi. Burial: Burwick Cemetery.

Sysaath, Johnny, 7, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: July 5, 1988, Bakersfield, Calif., to Phet Phet and Chanethoon Sysaath. Died: March 10, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va., of cancer. Survivors—parents; grandmother: Somne Sysaath. Funeral: March 13, Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, by Wayne North and Kathy Hochstedler. Burial: Weavers Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Yoder, Henry G., 91, Bally, Pa. Born: April 5, 1904, Bally, Pa., to Henry L. and Ella Yoder. Died: March 16, 1996, Pennsburg, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Elizabeth Kulp Yoder; children: Henry Paul, Harold, Roy, Ray, Arlin Richard, June Shenk; brother: Norman; 17 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: March 20, Boyertown Mennonite Church, by Nelson J. Shenk.

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'See, I am making all things new'

Creating something new is hard work. Just ask the 11 members of the Integration Committee. For 48 hours two weeks ago, they struggled to come up with a structure for the new merged denomination replacing the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church (see April 2 issue of *Gospel Herald*).

"What impresses me is how complex this work is," said Helmut Harder of Winnipeg, Man., during the Integration Committee meeting. Lindsey Robinson, Harrisburg, Pa., said it felt to him like eating an elephant—"which you have to do one bite at a time!"

God surely knows how the Integration Committee feels. As the writer of Genesis hints, Yahweh was exhausted after six days of creating. So God "rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done" (Gen. 2:2).

As years turned into centuries, and God's new creation became more and more corrupt—using what was created for its own purposes instead of for its Creator—those who tried to be faithful sometimes felt God was resting too long. "Why, O Lord, do you stand far off?" the psalmist asked. "Why do you hide yourself?" (Ps. 10:1).

God broke into history again with Jesus' resurrection. Here was a new creative act, one that would give humanity another chance to be God's partners in a new world.

Today, once again, we sometimes wonder if our God is resting too long. Injustice and greed abound. Every day we are confronted with situations in which evil seems to triumph over good. And we ask, "Why, O God, are you putting up with this?"

One example. According to a front-page story in the March 17 issue of *The New York Times*, because American soldiers' lives are being threatened by land mines in Bosnia, the U.S. Pentagon is considering ending its long-time opposition to banning the use of these weapons. Until now, the Pentagon has argued that it needs land mines "to reduce the number of soldiers needed in certain situations, to canalize the enemy, and to protect vital installations," according to the *Times*. This despite the fact that there are 100 million unexploded land mines all over the world—up to 1,200 of which go off every month, killing people, mostly civilians, many of them children who find the mines and think they are toys.

How in the name of sense can this continue, we ask ourselves. Or we cry with the psalmist: "How long, O Lord . . . how long will you hide your face?" (Ps. 13:1).

This longing for something new, for right to prevail over wrong, for justice to be done is a continuing cry of God's children. The early church put it in apocalyptic language: "Sovereign Lord, . . . how long will it be before you judge?" (Rev. 6:10). It continues today in sentiments like those expressed in the letter from 75 pastors (see page 5). Donella Clemens, Souderton, Pa., told the Integration Committee the question she gets asked most often these days is, "Where is the new thinking? What are the new ideas?"

We can do more than just wait for answers. The church has been given the keys of the kingdom, Jesus told Peter (Matt. 16:18-19). We are called to join God in the creation of something new.

A coalition of Mennonites in eastern Pennsylvania is doing just that in relation to land mines (see story on page 12). Lancaster Mennonite Conference, Atlantic Coast Conference, and Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa., have joined forces to ask a major defense contractor in their area, Bulova Technologies, to reconsider producing fuses and other components for land mines. So far the response has been mostly silence, though there is one report of an angry phone call threatening a lawsuit if the coalition's activities continue.

Each year as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection, we are invited to reconnect with the new that God is creating in our world. This creation is not always visible. So often it seems our God is still resting.

But faith says new life is possible, that we can join with God in making it happen. That's why the eastern Pennsylvania coalition keeps working. It's why 75 pastors sent their letter calling for revival and renewal. And, some would dare to believe, creation is happening as 11 people struggle to give shape to a new Mennonite denomination.

"See, I am making all things new," says a loud voice from God's throne in Rev. 21:5. To proclaim that hope, to make that a statement of faith, is to truly celebrate Easter.—*jlp*

April 16, 1996

Are not some parts of our lives a good bit like Rahab's: conniving, brazen, looking out for number one, willing to do whatever it takes to get our own way?

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

APR 15 '96

Is there room for sinners among the saints?

Where it isn't so, Christians become a stuck-up club. Like Rahab rescuing the spies, it is not unusual today for the sinners to save the righteous—from their stuffiness and their self-satisfaction.

by Mark R. Wenger

Ever hear of anyone naming their daughter Rahab? When our two daughters were born, my wife and I never even got close to including Rahab in the long list of name options. Naming children after biblical characters like Isaac, Sarah, Timothy, David, Peter, and Lois seems popular among us. So why don't we consider Rahab? After all, we know more about her than about Lydia, Eunice, Phoebe, or Dorcas.

The nasty fact is that we remember Rahab more for her profession than for what she did. We call her "Rahab the prostitute." She has never been fully rehabilitated in our collective memory; her bad reputation sticks to her like a smudge, though the Scriptures salute her as one of the great heroes of the faith.

The story of Rahab and her persistently unflattering status poses a tough question for the church: how good are we at being reconciled to sinners who come to Jesus in ways that are strange to us and with baggage we are embarrassed by or even afraid of? Is there really room for sinners among the saints?

And how do we deal with those sinful, broken

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Robert J. Baker:
God met me at Wichita—but not inside the temple 6

Sider calls Christians to concern for the poor 9

Winnipeg Mennonites help people get jobs 10

How do we deal with those sinful parts of our own lives? Is it possible to receive the risky and sometimes painful grace of God that strips us down to essentials?

parts of our own lives? Is it possible to receive the risky and sometimes painful grace of God that strips us down to the bare essentials so we can be reborn as God's children? I don't know many women who say that giving birth is easy. New birth rarely is a painless process either, personally or congregationally.

God comes to us on God's terms, and the church has no business trying to make it a safe, sweet, and respectable transaction. William Willimon in *The Intrusive Word* writes, "The true function of religion is not to get us right with God, but to leave us alone with God, so that we are stripped naked and driven into the arms of God."

Rahab—prostitute and hero—appears on the biblical scene just as the children of Israel prepare to move into the land of Canaan under their new leader, Joshua. On the eve of the invasion, Joshua engages in some intelligence gathering by sending two spies to Jericho.

The spies slip into town through one of the city gates and make their way to the house of Rahab. The city authorities somehow get word that two Israelites have sneaked into town that afternoon and are staying the night in the red light district at a pad operated by a hooker named Rahab. The king sends a few of his vice squad over on a raid to Rahab's house. "You may not know it," they inform her, "but those two men who were seen entering your house this afternoon are foreigners, terrorists here to case the city for an attack."

Rahab is no shrinking violet or timid lamb either. She is street smart—a tigress who has learned the hard way how to look out for herself. With brazen chutzpah she replies, "Yes, the men came earlier today, but I didn't know who they were. They were here for a little afternoon entertainment. As it was getting dark and time to close the city gate for the night, they headed back to their home. If you go after them quickly, you might still be able to catch them."

Rahab knows skills for surviving, not skills for being a saint. She admits what can't be denied, then lies through her teeth. All the while, up on the roof are the two spies she's hidden under bundles of drying flax. The authorities buy her story and take off on a wild-goose chase as the city gates swing shut for the night.

When the king's henchmen are gone, Rahab goes up on the roof and gets into conversation with the two Israelite spies, who now owe their lives to her. She gives them all the data about Jericho they need. The whole city has heard about the Israelites and are terrified. But, more important, Rahab makes a confession of faith: "I know that the Lord God has given this land to you. I believe the Lord your God is the true God of heaven and earth. Now will you promise to be kind to me and my family because I have protected you?"

Is this the beginnings of real faith, or is it just the wily wits of a survivor hedging her bets? I'd like to think there is indeed more going on inside Rahab than instinctual self-preservation and that she is coming to recognize something new: the true God of the universe. She is willing to take a terrific risk on an unknown future with God rather than cling to familiar indignities of life in Jericho. She declares her faith and acts on it with the same chutzpah she used in lying to the soldiers.

What follows is a tit-for-tat bargain. "You save our lives," the spies tell her, "and when Jericho falls, we will see that your family's lives are spared in exchange." This agreement is not motivated by agape love but mutual self-interest. It is a very human deal: you save us, we'll save you.

To guarantee that there is no misidentification when Israel attacks, Rahab is instructed to hang a red rope in the window of her house built into the wall of the city. The Israelites will then know who she is, and everyone in her house will be safe. With some parting instructions for the spies to head into the hills, Rahab lets them escape the city with a rope from her window. Three days later the spies return to Joshua and give their promising report. The invasion is on!

We Christians may find it easiest to relate to the two Israelite spies in the story. After all, the spies were part of the children of God. They were participating in God's plan to bring his people into the Promised Land by assisting in God's righteous intrusion.

All evangelism grows out of God's intrusion into the world—breaking in and shaking up the status quo. A God who doesn't intrude into the nitty-gritty of human lives is not God at all. God is not a lion in the zoo for us to look at for a vicarious thrill. Instead God is a loving lion who will never be tamed—a lion that prowls avenues of our lives and stalks the respectable streets of our subdivisions and the aisles of our churches, offices, and homes. Jesus Christ is

the incarnation of that intrusive God who keeps knocking on the door of the world.

We say we want to participate in God's business and work with God to help prepare the way for the invasion into the Promised Land. We go to spy out the enemy territory, we prepare evangelism strategies, we gather information to be more effective colabors with God, we manage institutions. The problem, however, is that we have a natural inclination to create disciples in our own image rather than in God's.

William Willimon tells the story of an evangelism effort undertaken by a church in which he pastored. Two older women were told to go down a certain road and turn right to visit someone and invite that person to church. The women accidentally turned left instead and knocked on the door of Verleen, who accepted their invitation and came to church. Verleen, though, was not the convert the congregation had in mind. Her life was messed up. She didn't know the right words, and she dressed sloppily. But she did know she needed the Lord, and she knew she needed a congregation.

Willimon writes, "Evangelism is not about helping more nice, buttoned-down, middle-class folks like me find deeper meaning in their lives. Evangelism is a gracious, unmanageable, messy by-product of the intrusions of God." A question continually haunts me: is the gospel of our congregations intended for winners or losers?

Perhaps it is easiest for typical church folk to identify with the Israelite spies in this story. But God often sets it up so that it's the sinners—the Rahabs, the Verleens, the losers of the world—who end up saving us from our own self-righteous superiority.

Jesus told a parable about the Pharisee and the sinner who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood up and prayed to God, thanking him for all the blessings he had received and reminding God of what a faithful believer the Pharisee was. The sinner, on the other hand, stood far away, and simply moaned, "God, I've made a mess of my life. Have mercy on me, have mercy on me."

Nothing could be clearer: there better be room for sinners among the saints in God's house. Where it isn't so, Christians become an unbearably stuck-up club. Like Rahab rescuing the spies, it is not unusual today for the sinners to save the righteous—from stuffiness and self-satisfaction.

But how about identifying with Rahab? It may be a little harder for some of us than for others, but it is well worth the try. She is a cunning liar, a street-smart hussy and a whore, a resourceful protector of her own interests—everything that good Christian people aren't supposed to be. So why is Rahab a biblical hero, and how can she be a role model?

We dare to salute Rahab because the Bible does! Rahab gets press as one of the great cloud of witnesses, one of the honored heroes of the faith who surround believers (Heb. 11:31). James also cites Rahab for being an example of someone who demonstrated her faith by her actions (James 2:25). But most tellingly, Rahab even finds her way into Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1. Tucked into that litany of names (v. 5) is Rahab. She was the mother of Boaz who became the husband of Ruth.

God worked someone like Rahab into the divine plan for Jesus. You've got to love a God who writes a person like Rahab into the story of Jesus, a God who includes her in the biblical hall of fame. If Rahab can slip into the family of God, then so might you and I.

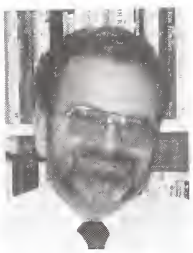
Parts of our lives are a good bit like Rahab's: conniving, brazen, looking out for number one, willing to do what it takes to get our way. Parts of our lives make us prostitutes to habits, addictions, secrets, and fears.

But God is in the invasion business today as much as in the time of Joshua and Rahab. To Rahab's credit and salvation, she recognizes that God is intruding into her world and it's going to mean a radical change for her. She will

(continued on page 8)

"Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; . . . Jesus said, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' "—John 20:18, 29

Gospel Herald



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READERS SAY

I was saddened to read in your Jan. 30 issue about the apparent lack of support for Mennonite colleges. Evidently many of today's Mennonites don't see much value in Mennonite higher education.

When I graduated from high school, my parents strongly encouraged me to attend Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va. This was not because it was the best financial value or the most prestigious college I could have attended. But my parents believed that there was value in a Mennonite education.

This in spite of the fact that my mother was denied admission to EMC in the 1940s. EMC, like many southern colleges, did not admit African-Americans in the 1940s—not even African-Americans from rural Lancaster County, Pa., who wore cape dresses, black stockings, and coverings. Undaunted and encouraged by her parents, my mother attended Goshen (Ind.) College instead.

As our young people wade through the difficult choices facing them after high school, I would hope that their parents would encourage them to attend a Mennonite institution. College is not simply a place to earn a degree. It is a place where one's values and beliefs are crystallized. At a Mennonite college, my beliefs were challenged, but they were also strengthened.

If parents feel that Mennonite colleges are no longer capable of strengthening the faith, then it's time that the church begins to dialogue with our colleges and make our concerns known. The colleges do belong to the church, and we have a responsibility to let them know when we feel they have erred.

I am a member of a church where numerous Goshen College students attend. One of them was featured in your Jan. 30 issue. I count it a blessing to have them in our congregation. If they are a reflection of the college, something good is happening there. The faith is being passed on.

Daniel B. Grimes
Goshen, Ind.

Three things church buildings can never do (Mar. 5). It always pains me to see churches put up big buildings—and expect them to witness to the Jesus who had "no place to lay his head." It also pained me when, as a director of a social service agency, people couldn't find money for us because their congregation had a big building project.

The same day this issue of *Gospel Herald* came in the mail, I also got a mailing from Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa., describing how the Ethiopian (Mennonite) church had matched, dollar for dollar, $200,000 raised by American partners to assist them. The mailing reported: "In the last 12 months, 64 churches were built by the Meserete Kristos Church. The average cost per church was $8,000."

Question: Could each church that is considering building to "stimulate growth" also send a contribution to help build churches that are *really* needed? If, for example, a church with a $1 million building program tithed that amount, Ethiopian Mennonites could build 25 more churches—with their matching funds.

May God help us as Mennonites to find appropriate buildings—whether borrowed, rented, or owned. Then we will be able to sing number one in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* with a clear conscience.

Nevin L. Horst
Kehancha, Kenya

I am uncomfortable with some of what *Gospel Herald* has published recently about interpreting the Bible. I agree that accusing others of "not taking the Bible seriously" or insisting that one's own interpretation is the "plain" meaning can be self-serving and destructive. But I also sense there may be wisdom in those words.

I hear intelligent Mennonites say that some of our theologians and teachers are hard to understand. And I sense that modern theological and biblical study is highly susceptible to bias from non-Christian philosophies, prejudices, and cultural influences.

So I pray that God would bring forth selfless, discerning, articulate men and women to help us understand more clearly.

I do think Ryan Ahlgrim made one mistake in ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19). He said that "justice for the oppressed and love for all people are central moral principles of the Bible" and should function "as interpretive starting points."

I believe that loving the Lord God with all our hearts and minds and

loving our neighbors as ourselves are the central moral principles of the Bible. We may be led astray in our attempts to bring justice and to love others if we do not begin by trusting, submitting to, fearing, and learning about God above all other gods, influences, principles, and philosophies.

Carlyle Schlabach
Marion, Ind.

We Can Be Both a People of the Book and a Community of the Spirit (Mar. 19). When the church seems to lag behind society, one needs to pause and ask whether changes are initiated by the Spirit.

The rise of feminism in our secular society seems to have caused the Mennonite church to embrace women in leadership. The rise of divorce and remarriage in society has led to change in the church in this area. The same can be said for the issue of homosexuality.

So the church just seems to be going with the secular society around it. If we would have led in some of these areas—such as the abolition of slavery—then there would be a lot less suspicion that these changes weren't merely the result of being sucked into society's ways.

George Berkey
Pine City, N.Y.

The article **17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible** (Mar. 19) was a very helpful message on biblical interpretation. May I add principle 18 as a question: Are verses a help or a hindrance in our quest for proper interpretation?

For 13 or more centuries, Christians did not have verses as a prop to lean on when reading the Bible. Today we do, and one result is the tendency to do "topical" rather than expository preaching and teaching.

The book of Revelation is one example of this. It has fallen prey to many interpreters who slavishly dissect the book verse by verse rather than seeing the flow of John's apocalyptic writing as a veiled message for those persecuted Christians and churches in Asia Minor.

I'm grateful that many of the new versions of the Bible play down the verse style by making them less prominent. We need, for good interpretation, a return to expository preaching and teaching which helps us override the division of verses.

Norman Derstine
Harrisonburg, Va.

It doesn't have to be a long hot summer

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your editorial in the March 12 issue, ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer.***

Susan Sommer
Tremont, Ill.

When Pilate struggled with the age-old question, "What is truth?" he failed to see the very embodiment of truth standing before him. Scripture records that Pilate made his decision to crucify Jesus because he was afraid of a riot and anxious to please the people.

When we choose to pursue peace at any price, as Pilate did, we discover there is indeed a price. The history books record our moral failures and their consequences with the clarity of hindsight.

Shouldn't we first look at truth and set aside the quest for peace and justice? When truth is violated, there will be no possibility of either peace or justice. If our heart's cry is, "What is truth?" won't we find that the answer is right before our eyes—as always?

Amy Dietz
Salem, Oregon

I'm unclear why we are being cautioned to wait on the issue of homosexuality. If waiting means the status quo, then I disagree. Your editorial uses the words "anger," "fear," "apprehension," "confusion," and "uncertainty." We cannot continue to let these feelings dictate the discussion.

If waiting means that we are not yet ready to vote, then I agree. The issue is volatile. An "either they are ousted or we leave" attitude is not a good backdrop for a vote. Too many people do not know what they believe. We need much more dialogue before we are ready to know what we believe.

But we should not wait to begin dialogue. It is crucial that the discussion move to forums that are guided by principles of Christian love. Church leaders should facilitate this process in the same way in which they did the discussion of MC-GC integration.

These forums need to be places where we *listen* to each other and *pray* together. And above all, the *safety* to tell the truth must be guaranteed. Threats of exclusion and expulsion simply cannot be a part of this process.

It will be a long, hard, and sometimes painful discussion. It is also work of the church that must be done.

Brad Moyer
San Diego, Calif.

It took the Quakers 100 years to reach consensus against slavery. More recently, the Church of the Brethren decided not to take any formal action on the matter of homosexuality for five years. So is there any reason for Mennonites to rush to a decision on what to do with congregations that disagree on the issue of homosexuality?

The issues are complex—sin, purity, compassion, unity, membership, mission—and deserve serious consideration. These require time to sort out.

The prayer of Jesus for unity (John 17) seems as important as the need for purity in the church. If we cannot resolve this issue in a spirit of unity, would it not be best to wait and pray? Would God have us rend the fabric of the body of Christ in order to preserve purity?

There are positive benefits coming from this debate. People are studying the Bible. We are challenging each other on faith and commitment. We are clarifying what authority the Scripture has for us. We are seeking the mind of Christ and desiring to be led by the Spirit.

God surely knew this debate would confront the church. Is it a test? We may not know the purpose yet. So let's wait, pray, and listen while God makes that purpose known.

Russ Leinbach
Paoli, Ind.

Your editorial and Martin Lehman's letter in the same issue spoke the wisest counsel we have heard on this subject for a long time. Thanks much.

Edgar and Ethel Yake Metzler
Kathmandu, Nepal

How my God met me (5):

God met me in Wichita—but not

I did not meet God all at once but over four days. And since that time last July, the memory has triggered innumerable secondary meetings: all because of Walter.

by Robert J. Baker

We sometimes talk about how we meet God through a worship experience. Perhaps we bump into God in the Scriptures or through a letter arriving at just the right time. God might come via a telephone call or as we view one of the wonders of creation. God could come to us in a moment of silence or might tap us on the shoulder "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds" (Job 33:15).

Each of these has happened to me. Yet a recent incident in which God met me was none of the above—nor was it a mountaintop experience or moment of ecstasy. Frankly, today the memory of that encounter is painful.

I did not meet God all at once but over a four-day period. And since that time in late July, the memory has triggered innumerable secondary meetings, all because of Walter.

My wife and I were attending Wichita '95—the Mennonite Church General Assembly. Anna Mae and I first saw Walter as we walked past the public library on the way to McDonalds one morning for breakfast. Walter was sitting on a stone bench on the library plaza, rubbing his eyes, several plastic bags at this feet. Without pointing, I said quietly to Anna Mae on that Tuesday morning, "He is probably one of the homeless in this city." It was a pretty obvious observation. I may have said it with a twinge of guilt, since we had just left our room in a very comfortable, air-conditioned Ramada Inn.

On Wednesday morning, Anna Mae declined the long walk to McDonalds, and I promised to bring her breakfast in a small insulated food carrier we had with us. As I left the Ramada, I said to her, "If that man is there on the library plaza, I'm going to stop and talk with him."

He was there. I decided to use the direct approach. Most homeless need money. I gave him a cheery, "Good morning," and asked gently, "Would a couple of dollars help you?" He smiled and said yes. I gave him two dollar bills for which he thanked me, and I walked on to McDonalds. I am certain that there are better approaches, but perhaps my homeless friend appreciated a donation without an inquest or interrogation.

On Thursday morning on my McDonalds trip, I stopped again. This time I introduced myself and told him why I was in Wichita. He told me his name, Walter, and why he was "rooming" at the Library Plaza. The police hassled him in another part of Wichita, but everything had been peaceable at this new location. Again I pressed two dollars into his hand. In my stumbling way, I wanted to help.

Later at McDonalds, I remembered that we had shaken hands and wondered whether I should go to the men's room and zealously wash them. Then I mentally slapped myself for my paranoia.

The Wichita, Kan., library is right next to the Century II Convention Center, where some of the Mennonite sessions were held. And the Ramada Inn, where we stayed and other

The author, Robert J. Baker, is his study at his home on County Road 13 near Elkhart, Ind.

meetings were conducted, is just across the street. So between delegate sessions and worship experiences, I visited the library and explored the various exhibits and reading rooms.

To my surprise, one day I saw Walter inside, moving somewhat furtively through the stacks. Walter used the air-conditioned library during the day to clean up, cool off, perhaps to read—to pass the time. I have seen homeless people in the Elkhart library back home in Indiana, snoozing in chairs, washing up in the restroom, even changing clothes. Walter must live both inside and outside the library.

Our morning meetings continued outside, usually around 7:00, always on my way to the restaurant. As I returned carrying Anna Mae's breakfast, Walter had already vacated his plaza apartment. And I often wondered about him and began to feel a strange bond to him.

One of those mornings I noticed that Walter wore a jacket over his shirt and sweater. Perhaps I stared too much, because he explained to me that the plaza and the night air can cool off rather quickly after the sun goes down. I wouldn't know, I thought, because thermostats take care of the temperature at the Ramada.

Another morning I asked Walter if I could pray with him. We held hands and I prayed. I do not remember what I said, except that the focus of it was for Walter. Walter seemed appreciative, and I believe it was genuine and not just a ploy for me to increase his two-dollar daily allowance. I write this with difficulty and some shame . . . it was like leaving a fifty-cent tip for a fifteen-dollar meal.

Saturday was the last time I made the McDonalds trip because we were leaving early the next morning for home. On that last morning, I tarried a bit longer at the library plaza and told Walter I would not be coming back to see him. "I will miss you, Walter," I said sadly.

"I will miss you too," he replied, and as we parted he thanked me for the dollars.

When I walked back from the restaurant that last morning on the other side of the street, I saw Walter with his bags, walking in the opposite direction. As we passed, the street like a great gulf between us, Walter saw me and smiled, waving in spite of what he carried. I waved back, and we went our separate ways.

I still wonder and worry about Walter, especially after the air chilled and the first frost appeared upon the ground. From the *Mennonite Yearbook*, I selected a Wichita Mennonite church and sent them a check for twenty-five dollars, giving them directions and asking them to see if Walter still resides just outside the public library. "If so, give him some money and use the rest for any program you have that aids the homeless," I wrote.

At Wichita, God did not meet me in the whirlwind of Mennonite integration discussion. Nor did I hear God in any vocal earthquakes as the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* was questioned. Nor did God appear in the flickering flames of controversy that flared and centered about the omission of holiness from the approved *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement. Instead, I met God through the still, small voice of homeless Walter.

God meets us in various ways, at various times. Often they are awe-inspiring, Damascus road experiences, moments of praise and exaltation. We feel uplifted and glorified as God meets us on our tiny, personal mounts of transfiguration. Some share them with rejoicing as they recall the holy moment. Others, as in my case, must share such moments with reluctance, confession, and shame. Never does a week go by that I do not think of Walter, relive our moments together, and try to recall our exact words. And I often offer a short prayer for Walter and all the Walters of the world. The memory of Walter always steers me to God.

God met me at Wichita—but not inside the temple. God met me outside, in the courtyard of the Gentiles.

Guilt, an almost forbidden word among us, can also be a prompting word. I am grateful to Walter of Wichita, who in innocence and without knowing it, said to me, "I would like to have you meet the God of the poor, the weak, the homeless. I am one of God's forgotten children."

Thanks, Walter.

Robert Baker, a veteran writer for Mennonite periodicals and a retired science teacher, lives in Elkhart, Ind. He is a member of the Belmont Mennonite Church.

Zairians mission workers sent to other countries in Africa

The Mennonite Church of Zaire has sent a mission worker to Angola and has plans to develop mission work in the Congo, according to three Zairians who gave reports to the Commission of Overseas Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church recently.

Fimbo Ganvunse, president of the Mennonite Church of Zaire, reported that the Mennonite Church in their country, with a membership of 80,000, lacks the finances to complete their evangelism goals. The church wants to find a "new way of working together [with North American churches] financially," he said.—*General Conference Mennonite Church*

Burundi church leaders meet together to "speak prophetically"

Protestant church leaders in Burundi, formerly bitterly divided along ethnic lines, recently met at a church center near Nairobi, Kenya, in an attempt to "speak the truth prophetically without fear or favor to all sides in our country." The Hutu and Tutsi leaders drafted a document that will guide their work over the next months and a task force to guide efforts calling for Burundi's army to be multiethnic. The leaders also spent time getting reacquainted with each other and "learning to know and trust one another again," according to Lauren and Suzy Yoder of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). MCC helped to arrange the meeting.

—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Churches try to persuade countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has launched an international petition to persuade industrialized countries to agree to binding timetables for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. According to WCC general secretary Konrad Raiser, countries which had ratified a Climate Change Convention did not adopt binding reduction targets of greenhouse gas emissions when they met in Berlin last year.

The petition calls on governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000 and to increase public debate on climate change issues. It will be handed to the United Nations in Bonn in March 1997. Those signing the petition also pledge to reduce their own energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

—*World Council of Churches*

Ministry in response to Los Angeles riots becomes national movement

The Shalom Initiative, a ministry that began in response to the 1992 Los Angeles riots, has become a national movement within the United Methodist Church. The program has expanded to involve 350 congregations in 22 states. Volunteers work to improve neighborhood life by promoting jobs, health care, business development, housing, and spiritual renewal. Leaders stress working collaboratively with community residents and groups, said John Schol, national director.

In Los Angeles, volunteers bought a vacant three-story building that is being turned into a day-care center, space for six businesses, and a job-training center.—*National and International Religion Report*

Is there room for sinners among the saints?

(continued from page 3)

have to turn her back on her own people and risk everything to be saved as a child of God. She is going to have to start a new life and to be born again.

But in the end, Rahab can't save herself. Her salvation, her future life, hangs by a scarlet rope out her window. Like the blood on the doorposts at Passover that saved the Israelites from the death angel—and like the blood of Jesus that saves us today from eternal destruction—that red rope identifies her as one of the protected when the walls of Jericho fall to the Israelites. In the end, God saves her, and the final word we have about Rahab in the Old Testament comes from Josh. 6:25: "But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day."

Whoever you tend to identify with in this story—the Israelite spies who get rescued by a sinner or Rahab who recognizes the invasion of God and risks it all to become part of it—the message is unavoidable: there always needs to be room for sinners among the saints.

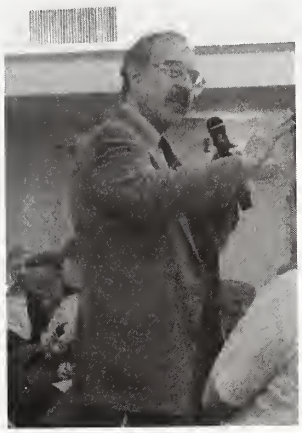
God decisively invaded this world through Jesus Christ: not to make humans more successful and respectable, but because God loved us and wanted to save us from ourselves. God wanted to save us from our religious complacency and from our Jerichos destined for destruction. Rahab took up residence among the children of God, and her story echoes among them yet today.

Is there room for sinners among the saints? If not, none of us belongs or deserves to be there.

Mark R. Wenger and his wife, Kathy, are pastors of the Springdale Mennonite Church in Waynesboro, Va. He is also currently working on his doctoral dissertation with Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va. This article comes from a series of sermons on personalities from the Bible that he preached at Springdale.

Sider calls Christians to 'measure every initiative against how it will affect the poor' and to resist nationalistic pride

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—"Any Christian in politics should constantly hold up the poor and measure every new initiative against how it will affect the poor," Ron Sider told a group gathered at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on March 14.



Ron Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action, speaks to an audience at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., on March 14.

In the middle of this year's primary season with issues of family values, abortion, immigration, and the environment at the forefront, the evangelical Christian author and speaker asked the question, "Would Jesus join the Christian Coalition?"

Sider, professor of theology at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wynnewood, Pa., and an ordained minister in the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference, led discussion on how Christians should approach political questions.

Sider cautioned Christians to have humility in asserting their positions on political issues. "I believe God has a position on each issue. But you and I don't know what it is. We have to find it out by a long, painful process."

Before attempting to answer the title question of his presentation, the president of Evangelicals for Social Action first shared his own political philosophy. Sider noted concerns such as sharing not only governing power but also economic power, evaluating every political action according to what it does to the poor, and valuing both freedom and justice. In addition, Sider said, "We ought to be internationalists first and nationalists second. My Savior died for every person in the world, so I must consider every person as important. We need to resist nationalistic pride."

Political balance. The limitations of politics also plays a part in his philosophy. "Politics is not the only way to change the world," he said. In fact, some problems are not appropriate for the government to solve, such as the breakdown of the family in our culture. "It's not up to the state to solve this problem; it's up to synagogues and churches."

Finally, Sider called for political balance. Opposed to one-issue politics, he said he believes God cares about the family, the poor, the oppressed, creation, and many other issues. Christians must work to balance Biblical concerns.

From the perspective of this political philosophy, Sider said he agrees with the Christian Coalition in several areas: strengthening the family, opposition to abortion, and lowering the federal budget deficit.

Economic gap is immoral. In other areas, according to Sider, the Christian Coalition is wrong, starting with its name. "The name implies too much," he said, and again called for Christians to have more humility about claiming their positions as "Christian."

The environment is another area of difference between the Christian Coalition and Evangelicals for Social Action. "This is God's creation. God told you and me to take care of it." To say nothing about the environment is immoral, Sider told his audience.

Best-known for his book, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger,* Sider said many of the cuts included in the Republicans' "Contract with America" are not consistent with concern for the poor. That doesn't mean the Democrats are always right, he was quick to add. But as the poorest in our country are losing and the very rich are gaining rapidly, the growing economic gap is "fundamentally immoral." It's essential, Sider said, that "the strongest political voices in our country speak for the weakest."

Would Jesus join the Christian Coalition? Sider answered, "Probably not."—*Mary E. Klassen*

MCC ships food and medicine to citizens of Iraq

Mennonite Central Committee worker Paul Pereverzoff visited Iraq last month to distribute MCC aid—including medicines and canned meat—as well as to assess needs in Iraq for the agency.—Editor

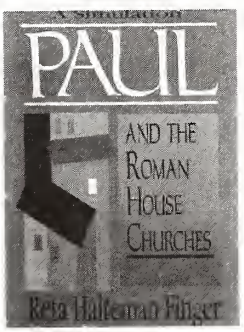
Basra, Iraq (MCC)—The first morning of the food distribution we drove to the now-empty Iraqi Dates Warehouse. Soon afterward, Shiite Muslim women, wearing chadors (long black veils) began to gather at the gate.

Iraqi volunteers from the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies planned to give each family three cans of MCC canned beef and milk powder from another agency.

'Simply not enough food.' The crowd that gathered had no idea what they would receive. They were marsh Arabs, destitute people driven from their homes by the Persian Gulf War and postwar political events. The Iraqi government is draining the marshes where for thousands of years these people had lived self-sufficiently. Officially, the marshes are being dried up to increase the amount of arable land; another notable result has been to prevent the transport of weapons from Iran to Iraqi rebel groups.

Local Federation volunteers had carefully prepared a list of needy people who were to receive the meat and milk. But at every distribution, many impoverished people do not make the list. There is simply not enough food to give to everyone.

At the end of the two-day distribution, hundreds of waiting people who were not on the list had not received food. As we attempted to close the warehouse doors, the crowd surged forward. Eventually they were driven back and we were able to shut and lock the doors and leave the scene. Later we also distributed some food to the town's pediatric hospital and to a daycare center for disabled people.



Paul Pereverzoff

Iraq now has literally millions of hungry people. One evening I was shown what had once been a three-room house near the downtown. Now it has only two rooms. The family, like so many others, had sold everything in the house. Now they were even selling bits of the house itself. They knocked down one of the rooms to sell the reinforcing steel from the columns and roof. Iraq has been unable to import steel due to the embargo, and so the price of steel is high.—*Paul E. Pereverzoff*

Mennonite agencies join to help people get jobs

Winnipeg, Man. (MCC Canada)—Many Winnipeggers on social assistance want to work, but they don't have the skills needed to fill entry-level positions.

Many Winnipeg employers want to hire welfare recipients, but they don't have the resources to provide academic upgrading and life skills training.

Now three Mennonite organizations have joined forces to help Winnipeggers on social assistance and employers get together so people can make the transition from welfare to work.

• • •

The three—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) Winnipeg Chapter, and the Trainex Centre—are working together in a government-funded pilot project called Manitoba Works—Opportunities for Employment. The program is designed to screen, select, and train welfare recipients for placement into jobs with commercial organizations, says Garry Loewen, who directs MCC Manitoba's employment development program.

Ongoing employment counseling and support will also be provided.

MCC Manitoba will coordinate the two-year pilot project, which is designed to find jobs for about 100 people during its first year of operation and up to 250 people in subsequent years. If the program is successful in Winnipeg, it will expand to rural Manitoba.

The province has agreed to reimburse costs for each successful placement. A placement is considered successful when the employee has held a full-time job for six months. Employees will continue to receive social assistance until they have found a job.

"One advantage to the government is that it pays only for results," says Loewen. "By the time government pays us for a successful placement, they have already saved six months of welfare payments."

• • •

The need for this type of service was identified by people in the Mennonite business community who have a strong interest in improving economic opportunities for people on welfare as an expression of their Christian faith.

"It's a fabulous program—you can't ask a person to go cold turkey into the work force," says Tamara Fast, chair of MEDA's 200-member Winnipeg chapter.

Fast, sales manager of Willmar Windows, explains her company employs 800 people during peak season. Many applicants require basic academic upgrading and assistance with fundamental employment related issues, such as daycare and transportation needs.

"We could lean on a service like this to provide us with qualified applicants," says Fast.

She is confident many of the 200 members in the Winnipeg MEDA chapter will provide job opportunities for people in this program.

The commitment from the business sector is "our ace in the hole," says Jake Dyck, program director of Trainex Centre, adding he is confident the program will succeed in Winnipeg and expand to rural Manitoba. "We want to be proactive in change, rather than be forced into it," he explains.

Loewen says MCC's involvement in addressing the employment needs of Winnipeggers is in keeping with MCC's mandate to work on behalf of those who have little economic power and are at the margins of society.

"We want to be in solidarity with people who are poor in foreign countries and we want to be in solidarity with people who are denied opportunity in our own country," he says.

—Gladys Terichow

Commissioned. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Commissioned at the closing service of the Lancaster Conference Spring Assembly, Paula and Antonio Alcantara are beginning a church among the 7,000-member Filipino community in the greater Philadelphia area. They and a church planting team of seven are currently involved in giving direction to 11 home groups as they plan for their first public worship service May 5. This outreach to Filipinos represents a new ethnic group for Eastern Mennonite Missions stateside church planting efforts. Also commissioned March 17 were David and Helen Eshleman, Washington, D.C., Bill and Sandra Brown, Mt. Ranier, Md., Kinfe and Adanech Zewdie, Baltimore, Md., and George and Frosina Kuttab, Philadelphia, Pa. The Kuttabs' work among Arabic-speaking people also represents a new ethnic group for EMM's stateside church planting efforts.

'God's finger touched' Mississippi church

Gulfport, Miss. (MBM)—Thirteen years ago, Gulfhaven Mennonite Church appeared every bit the dying church, whose congregation of 30 to 40 people consisted almost exclusively of people age 50 and up.

"Can anybody go to that church?" David Weaver, assistant pastor, remembers one community resident asking about what then was a fairly isolated, rural congregation.

What happened? But these days it is not unusual for over 100 people to crowd into its 75-year-old woodframe sanctuary, which has room for only 85 people. This spring, the congregation hopes to break ground for a $260,000 project to create an expanded fellowship hall and a sanctuary with room for 250 people.

How did this change occur?

"There are certain congregations God has his finger on. He somehow helps them see special things happen," says David Kniss, pastor of the church. "I think Gulfhaven is one of those places."

Gulfhaven Mennonite Church was founded in 1921 by Mennonite families who moved to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in search of a warmer climate.

Maida Carr, the only surviving charter member, moved to the community with her family at age 17, when her father came from the Midwest in search of cheap land. In 1922, the Mennonite families built a woodframe church, which still serves as Gulfhaven's sanctuary. "We really had a hard struggle. We almost gave up a few times," Carr says. "Praise God! We've made it."

Finding something exciting. Much of the recent growth has come through people who attend Alcoholics Anonymous and invite others. Nine people are involved in one of the 12-step programs. "Our growth is coming from the new people coming here," says Kniss, an urban ministry director for Mennonite Board of Missions.

And their evangelism program? "We don't have any," Kniss says. "It is happening because each person is discipled. They can be involved in evangelism even though they don't know the four spiritual laws or verses. Everything happens through new believers, not through the old guard. The new people who come have to find something exciting enough to tell others about it."—*Tom Price*

Shirley and Harold Corwin recently joined Gulfhaven Mennonite Church. They are shown here with granddaughters Courtney (left) and Brittany Thibodaux.

'Last seven months have been like a honeymoon'

Couple finds new family in Gulfhaven congregation

Gulfport, Miss.—"People I'd never met before came up and gave us hugs," says Shirley Corwin, Gulfport, Miss., of her first visit to Gulfhaven Mennonite Church in July 1995.

She and her husband, Harold, baptized members of the congregation, are now often the first to come and last to leave church events. "Anything that's going on at the church, they are there," says Esther Kniss of the same congregation.

It hasn't always been that way. Harold quips that the last time he had been to a church was on their wedding day, adding that now the coffee served between worship and Sunday school helps keep him coming.

And what started them attending? Harold, a mechanic, met Gulfhaven member Jerry Geil through Alcoholics Anonymous. Harold had struggled with alcoholism for years, having come from an alcoholic family himself. "Drinking was the only thing that got rid of the pain," he says.

The pressures of numerous moves, medical bills, and his addiction culminated one night in June 1995 when Harold tried to commit suicide by hooking a vacuum cleaner hose to his car. He was unconscious when the ambulance arrived.

"We never found out who called 911," says Shirley. She was in the hospital after a minor procedure, no one else was home, and their house is on a desolate road with no lights or close neighbors.

Thankful for life. Harold and Shirley seem content with leaving the events of that night as mysterious as they were then. Right now they are just thankful that Harold is alive, that he hasn't touched a drink since that night, and that their new church family is supporting them in ways they never knew possible.

Their marriage has changed as well. "The last seven months have been like a honeymoon," says Shirley. "I don't have to worry who is coming home for supper—Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde," she says with a smile at her husband. "Now it's more like Abbott or Costello!"

Harold and Shirley are still obviously pained that they've made these changes only after their three children are grown. But now, as Shirley watches her two granddaughters play, she hopes the next generation can escape some of the pain she and Harold have endured. "I hope," she says. "I just hope . . . ."

—*Valerie Weaver*

nvest in the future

hey shall possess it forever,
rom generation to generation
hey shall live in it. *Isaiah 34:17b*

A tree is harvested for today's needs.
t takes faith and foresight
o plant for tomorrow.
nvest in Christian service by
emembering MCC in your will.

Mennonite
Central
Committee

Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S.
21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

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SOOPers sort, serve, and share. *Carlsbad, N.M.*—Steve and Mary Ellen Gingerich of Zurich, Ont., sort and price clothing in the bargain store at the Carlsbad Association for Retarded Citizens (CARC). They are two of nine participants in the Service Opportunities for Older Persons (SOOP) program who volunteered through the Carlsbad Mennonite Church this winter. Persons in this program of Mennonite Board of Missions worked at the city's soup kitchen, tutored children, arranged flowers for the hospital auxiliary, and sorted items at the CARC bargain store. "These Mennonite women always show up when they say they will," said a manager at the bargain store. "And they get the work done!"

The SOOP participants also taught Sunday school and sang in the choir at the Mennonite congregation.

—submitted by Ellen W. Good

- **Middle school to open.** A new middle school affiliated with Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind., will open in the fall of 1996. The project begins as a result of a local petition of parents and teachers and support from Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Grade six will be a self-contained classroom, and grades seven and eight will be team-taught on an interdisciplinary basis.

- **Dutch MEDA formed.** Mennonites in the Netherlands have formed a Dutch version of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). MEDA-Nederland, a legal foundation to house micro-economic development activities and a fellowship network for Mennonites in business, was set up by Avo and Lynn Kaplanian and Kees Knijnenberg. It is the third such organization to form outside North America in the past year, the others operating in Paraguay and Zaire.

- **Teams address racism.** Teams from nine Mennonite and Brethren in Christ institutions met March 23-26 in Leavenworth, Kan., to begin an antiracism training process called The Damascus Road. A team from Crossroads, an interfaith ministry for racial justice, helped 47 participants analyze how institutions need to go beyond "non-racism" to actively working to dismantle racism. A follow-up event to help teams develop anti-racism educating and organizing skills will be held May 20-24 in Chicago.

- **Exhibit travels.** Thirteen Mennonite-related artists have created pieces of art based on New Testament personalities for use in the church. The exhibit has been traveling to various churches around North America and is based directly on the Winter 1996-97 quarter of the *Adult Bible Study*, a Sunday School guide for the Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite churches.

- **Artists invited.** The People's Place Gallery, Intercourse, Pa., will hold its annual "Art 96" weekend on Nov. 8-9. Artists are invited to submit slides of three works completed within the last two years. Interested persons can contact Renny Magill at 800 762-7171 for more information and entry forms.

- **Correction.** Graduation exercises for Eastern Mennonite Seminary are scheduled for April 27, with John P. Williams, Jr., as the speaker. Undergraduate commencement with speaker Lee Snyder occurs April 28. This was incorrectly printed in the April 9 issue of *Gospel Herald.*

- **New appointments:**

Vincent S. Cash, director of the adult degree completion program at Easter Mennonite University.

- **Coming events:**

"Single and Single Again" retreat, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., April 19-21. Al D'Ippolito, a single parent, will lead the retreat. More information from 800 839-1021.

Mennonite Lawyers' Association annual meeting, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., April 19-21. Speakers are Staughten and Alice Lynd. More information from 800 839-1021.

Revival fellowship conference, Elizabethtown (Pa.) Mennonite Church, April 26-28. Samuel Gatere and John Gatu from Kenya and Jim and Jean Perry are the featured speakers. More information available from 717 361-8990.

Friendship Community Fest and Auction, Lititz, Pa., May 11. Activities include entertainment, wagon and tractor rides, and auction of locally produced items. Proceeds benefit this nonprofit agency for adults with developmental disabilities. More information from 717 656-2466.

Menno Haven Annual Golf Classic, Chambersburg, Pa., May 17. Proceeds benefit endowment funds of Menno Haven and Penn Hall. Registration and sponsorship information available from Clarence Bauman at 717 263-8545.

Country Auction and Chicken Barbecue, Penn View Christian School, Souderton, Pa., May 17-19. Includes general merchandise and quilt auctions, antique car show, and food stands. More information from 215 723-1196.

CPS #39 (Galax) and #107 (Three Rivers) Reunion, Bluffton (Ohio) College, June 11-13. More information from Richard Pannabecker at 419 358-1761.

Schmucker-Smoker-Smucker fifth reunion, Lancaster, Pa., July 18-20. Ivan J. Kauffman is the keynote speaker, and numerous workshops are planned. Open to those interested in Amish and Mennonite history. More information from A. Pearl Kreider, 546 Milton Rd., Lancaster, PA 17602.

- **Job openings:**

Activities director, Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa. Qualifications include one year of experience and ability to coordinate programs in a continuing care facility. Contact Human Resources, 717 581-3936.

Teaching positions, Juniata Mennonite School, McAlisterville, Pa. Openings are second-grade teacher, part- to full-time teacher of middle school Bible, middle school social studies/history, and K-8 physical education. Contact administrator Tim Stichter at 717 463-2898.

NEW MEMBERS

Carpenter Park, Hollsopple, Pa.: Gary Rager, Jesse Blasko, Lindsay Trout, Brittany Berkey, and Ashley Greene.

Dayton, Va.: Larkin Biehn, Vincent Rhodes, and Chapple Skillman.

Fairview, Albany, Ore.: Kristin Ropp, Jennifer Roth, Wesley Scheler, Spence Smith, Brittany Ulrich, and Morgan Ulrich.

Landis Valley, Lancaster, Pa.: Scott Baum, Desiree Wann, and Joseph Wann.

Olive, Elkhart, Ind.: Corinna Russwurm, Dawn Witmer, Justin Witmer, Teresa Witmer, and Kristen Towne.

Springdale, Waynesboro, Va.: Louise H. Alderfer, Richard D. Alderfer, Sandy Burkholder, Steve Driver, Christine Grove, Brian Miller, Fannie Miller, Richard B. Miller, Richard Miller, Jr., and Steven Miller.
Watertown, N.Y.: Shauna Zehr and Abby Robbins.
Wellman, Iowa: John and Rose Dillard, Lori Miller, and Karl Yoder.
West Zion, Carstairs, Alta.: Chris Bork, J. J. Bork, Cam Buschert, Justin Buschert, Clara Duncalfe, Becky Jensen, Jeanette Hartzler, and Roger Sayer.

BIRTHS

Alderfer, Lois Waybill and Steve, Charlottesville, Va., Andrew Nelson (third child), March 6.
Bielinski, Angie Shank and Steve, Denmark, Wis., Sabrina Naomi (fourth child), March 14.
Bloemberg, Linda Koch and Jacob, Avon, N.Y., Josiah Jacob (second child), Feb. 1.
Clifton, Betty Minninger and William, Hannibal, Mo., Rebecca Leigh (first child), Feb. 26.
Crane, Monica and Dana, Broadway, Va., Nathan Allen, Jan. 26.
Engel, Rhobie Billett and Clyde, Marietta, Pa., Thomas LaRue (fourth child), Feb. 9.
Fitz-Gerald, Ruth Weldy and Kevin, Bowling Green, Ohio, Garrett William (fourth child), Jan. 27.
Frey, Elaine Brunk and Sid, Mount Joy, Pa., Colton Matthew (third child), Feb. 23.
Hostetler, Minnette Burkholder and Chad, Harrisonburg, Va., Thane Justice (first child), March 19.
Hughes, Sherri Roth and David, Schwenksville, Pa., Michaiah Nichole (first child), March 16.
Jones, Donita and Wesley Scott, Arlington, Tex., Morgan Nichole (first child), March 3.
Kauffman, Ardith Hostetter and James, Dayton, Va., Emily Grace (first child), Aug. 8.
Kauffman, Lisa Moyer and Steven, Souderton, Pa., Janae Danielle (second child), March 23.
Lehman, Rachel Wenger and Ronnie, Chesapeake, Va., Alexis Skye (second child), March 2.
Martin, Cheryl Lyndaker and Brian, Versailles, Mo., Ian Nathaniel (first child), Feb. 1.
Mast, Shari Yoder and Dale, Harrisonburg, Va., Quincy Elliot (second child), March 2.
Meissner, Becky Springer and Manfred, Vienna, Austria, Gabriele Patricia (second child), March 2.
Neufeldt, Freda Burkholder and Quinton, Markham, Ont., Alexandra (first child), March 25.
Randolph, Katherine and Neil, Singers Glen, Va., Matthew Neil (first child), July 9.
Rhodes, Donita Schwartzentruber and Stephen C. "Dusty," Harrisonburg, Va., Stephen Carter, Jr. (second child), March 25.
Rohr, Sheila and Jon, Lancaster, Pa., Madeline Clere (first child), Feb. 19.
Rush, Karen Miller and Phil, Harrisonburg, Va., Sarah Miller (first child), March 7.
Smoker, Kelli and Verlyn, Lubbock, Tex., John Daniel (first child), Jan. 19.
Stauffer, Bernadine and Wade, Broadway, Va., Leah Joy (second child), Oct. 21, 1995.
Wise, Shirley Christofic and Jim, Middletown, Pa., Holly Rose (third child), March 1.
Witmer, Luisa Showalter and Wayne, Harrisonburg, Va., Madeleine Irene (first child), Feb. 18.
Yeager, Diana Pagels and Kevin, Sturgis, Mich., Charity Sue (second child), March 27.
Yoder, Melissa Weaver and Keith, Goshen, Ind., Trever Ray (second child), March 13.

MARRIAGES

Bacher-Mettler: Kevin L. Bacher, Ashford, Wash. (Albany), and Kelli R. Mettler, Ashford, Wash. (Catholic), March 2.
Bailey-Zimmerman: Douglas Jay Bailey, Wauseon, Ohio (United Methodist), and Donna Pearl Zimmerman, Wauseon, Ohio (Inlet), Oct. 7, by Alan Ladd and Homer E. Yutzy.
Beck-Kohler: Rebecca Beck, Archbold, Ohio (Lockport), and Benjamin Kohler, March 16, by Charles Gautsche.
Begly-Gochenaur: Colleen Begly, Sturgis, Mich. (Locust Grove), and Scott Gochenaur, Howe, Ind. (Brighton Chapel), March 23, by Jay Ulrich and George Youstra.
Hartman-Martin: Grace Hartman, Louisville, Ohio (Beech), and Byron Martin, Louisville, Ohio (Midway), March 23, by Melvin Leidig.

DEATHS

Beachy, Raymond Noah, 67, Sarasota, Fla. Born: Dec. 16, 1928, Hartville, Ohio, to Noah E. and Lydiann Miller Beachy. Died: March 7, 1996, Sarasota, Fla., of muscular degeneration. Survivors—wife: Darla Knerr Yancey Beachy; children: Marilyn Linder, Barbara Boggs, Kenneth, R. Scott; stepchildren: Kathie Driggers, Jean Pilgrim, Susan Comes, David and Daniel Yancey; brothers and sisters: Eli, John, Jonathan, Daniel, Joseph, Alvin, Amanda Otto, Nancy Troyer, Mary Sommers, Martha Miller; 11 grandchildren, 14 step grandchildren, 4 step-great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Bay Shore Mennonite Church. Predeceased by: Emma Shrock Beachy (first wife). Funerals: March 9, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, by A. Don Augsburger and Norman Yutzy; March 12, Hartville Mennonite Church, by Henry Shrock and Dave Hall. Burial: Hartville Mennonite Church Cemetery.
Byler, David H., 99, Belleville, Pa. Born: Dec. 30, 1896, Belleville, Pa., to Benjamin and Sarah Swarey Byler. Died: March 20, 1996, Lewistown, Pa. Survivors—children: Effie Hostetler, Cora Byler, Elsie R. Byler, Sarah Bechler; 20 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren, 5 step-grandchildren, 12 step-great-grandchildren, 3 step-great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Rebecca S. Peachey Byler (wife) and Nancy Long (daughter). Funeral and burial: March 24, Locust Grove Mennonite Church, by Jesse Yoder, Erie Renno, and Raymond Peachey.
Good, Menno Simon, 97, Elida, Ohio. Born: Dec. 5, 1898, Allen County, Ohio, to Simon and Barbara Greider Good. Died: March 7, 1996, Delphos, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Velma Good Augsburger Good; children: LaVerne, Norman, Elouise King; stepchildren: Oren and Carol Augsburger, Melba Myers, Wilma Martin; 10 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, 16 step-grandchildren, 25 stepgreat-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Eunice Diltz Good (first wife). Funeral and burial: March 11, Salem Mennonite Church, by Mel Hathaway.
Hershberger, Boyd T., 72, Hollsopple, Pa. Born: Dec. 14,

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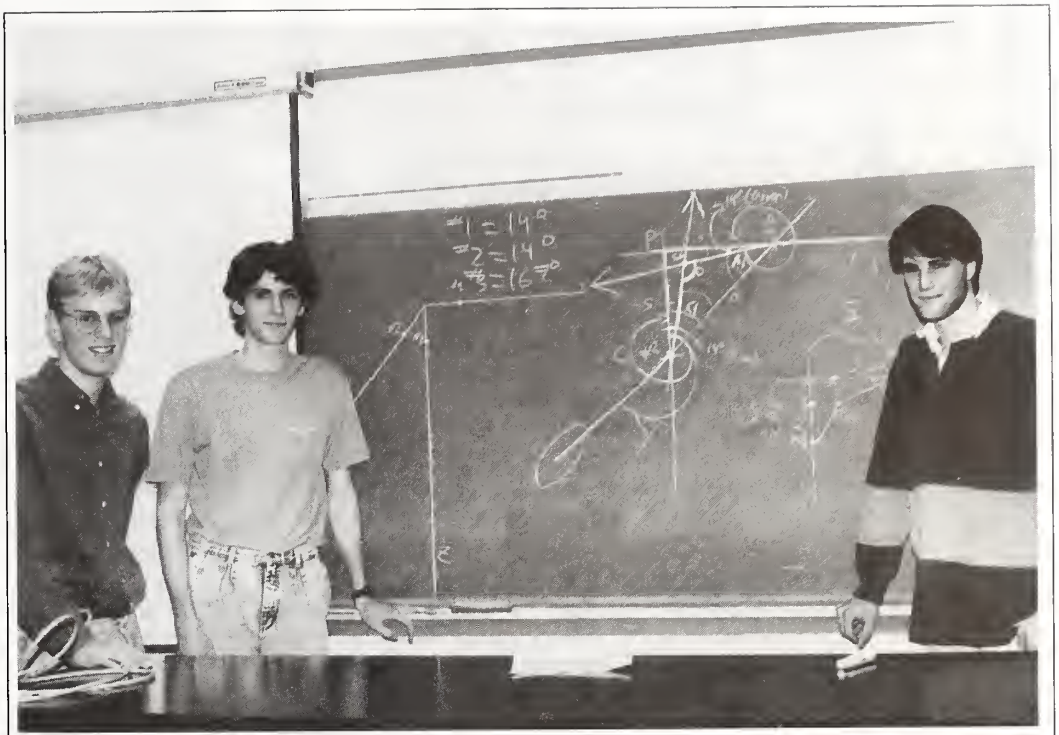
1923, Hollsopple, Pa., to Norman and Linnie Thomas Hershberger. Died: March 14, 1996, Johnstown, Pa. Survivors—sister: Ruth M. Kaufman. Predeceased by: Bernice L. Shetler Hershberger (wife). Funeral and burial: March 18, Kaufman Mennonite Church, by Donald D. Sharp and Marvin L. Kaufman.

Jaques, Raymond James, 82, Gendive, Mont. Born: July 13, 1913, Minot, N.D. Died: Dec. 31, 1995, Great Falls, Mont. Survivors—wife: Eva Mae Kauffman Jaques; children: Becky McMahan, Jim, Tom, April Ripley; sisters: Violet Godfrey, Margaret Godfrey; 9 grandchildren. Congregational membership: White Chapel Mennonite Church. Funeral: Jan. 4, 1996, United Methodist Church, by Russell Barber. Burial: Choteau Cemetery.

Liechty, John H., 74, Goshen, Ind. Born: July 6, 1921, Smithville, Ohio, to John B. and Cora Berkey Liechty. Died: March 11, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Ruth E. Yoder Liechty; children: Bonnie King, John A., Daniel E.; sister: Pauline Schrock; 6 grandchildren. Funeral: March 14, College Mennonite Church, by James Waltner and Virgil Gerig. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

Nice, Henry Robert, 66, Newport News, Va. Born: Aug. 26, 1929, Warwick County, Va., to Henry L. Nice. Died: March 14, 1996, Newport News, Va., of leukemia. Survivors—wife: Pauline Wenger Nice; children: Cheryl Nice Frantz, Delores Nice Campion, Donna Nice Sawyer, Cindy Nice Bueter, Henry, Jr., Brenda Nice Lytle; brothers and sisters: Louis, Daniel, George, Cecil, Lou Heatwole, Ruby Ziegler, Dorothy Blosser, Bertha Schaefer; 7 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: March 19, Warwick River Mennonite Church, by Gordon Zook and Glendon Blosser.

Rupp, Eldon E., 90, Archbold, Ohio. Born: June 28, 1905, Pettisville, Ohio, to Simon H. and Emma E. Wyse Rupp. Died: March 21, 1996, Fulton County, Ohio. Survivors—children: Donald, Leon, Leroy, Doris, Ruth Ann, Velma Horst, Arlene Short; sister: Elsie Reynolds; 24 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lydia E. Stuckey Rupp (wife). Funeral: March 25, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman and Charles Gautsche. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.



Crash course. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—Eastern Mennonite University students (left to right) Geoffrey Hileman, Galen Kulp, and Tim Frederick display one of several models they developed to solve a problem in an international mathematics competition. The EMU trio entered the 1996 Annual Math Contest in Modeling, an international competition sponsored by the Consortium of Math and its Applications, based in Lexington, Mass.

The students worked nonstop over a February weekend to solve the problem: "To find a submerged submarine that does not emit any noise in an ambient [enveloping] noise field." Using math and trigonometry principles and laws of physics, the students developed criteria for determining the location, speed, size, and bearing of the submarine using three underwater microphones. The three then raced their thick, computer-assisted summary document to the Harrisonburg post office minutes before the postmark deadline. Results are expected to be announced the end of April.—*Jim Bishop*

Schwartzentruber, Harold John, 71. Born: Oct. 5, 1924, East Zorra Twp., Ont., to David and Barbara Streicher Schwartzentruber. Died: March 20, 1996, Tavistock, Ont. Survivors—wife: Isabel Jean Ruby Schwartzentruber; sons: Dale, Paul; brothers and sister: Glen, Earl, Betty Bearinger; 3 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Terrance Wayne (son). Congregational membership: Tavistock Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: March 22, East Zorra Mennonite Church, by Darrel Toews.

Short, Clara E. Eicher, 100, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Sept. 20, 1895, Archbold, Ohio, to Daniel and Emma Wyse Eicher. Died: March 25, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivors—7 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Peter J. Short (husband) and Oakley and Maynord (sons). Funeral and burial: March 28, Lockport Mennonite Church, by Charles Gautsche and Allen Rutter.

Smith, Alma L., 95, Eureka, Ill. Born: Aug. 5, 1900, Washington, Ill., to Peter and Magdalena Esch Schertz. Died: March 20, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivors—children: Lyle, Robert, Rachel Ringenberg; 10 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Walter H. Smith (husband). Funeral: March 23, Metamora Mennonite Church, by Robert E. Nolt. Burial: Hickory Point Cemetery.

Stauffer, Philip W., 96, Milford, Neb. Born: Feb. 9, 1900, Milford, Neb., to Joe and Katie Reil Stauffer. Died: March 23, 1996, Milford, Neb. Survivors—wife: Verna Stutzman Stauffer; children: Cleve, K. Elaine Burkey, Imogene Hostetler; brother and sister: Wilton, Ruby Mast; 10 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: March 27, East Fairview Mennonite Church, by Lloyd Gingerich, Lloyal Burkey, and William J. Saltzman.

Yoder, Ona E., 88, Parnell, Iowa. Born: Feb. 6, 1908, Parnell, Iowa, to William M. and Lovina Edie Yoder. Died: March 18, 1996, Wellman, Iowa. Survivors—brother and sister: Rollie W., Cordelle Yoder. Funeral and burial: March 21, West Union Mennonite Church, by Dean Swartzendruber and Emery Hochstetler.

Newspaper

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THE LAST WORD

Nobody's telling me *what to do!*

The chief priests and elders of the people thought they had Jesus cornered. "Tell us," they said, "who gave you the authority to do what you're doing?"

Jesus' answer was another question. Now this seems an ingenious way Jesus had to keep himself out of trouble. I wonder if he wasn't also aware this was a no-win question—not only for his day, but also for ours.

For who of us hasn't said at least once—and thought often—"Nobody has the right to tell me what to do!" Had Jesus given an answer to the authority question, without a doubt we'd be proof-texting it today to shore up whatever answer we happen to like.

Who does have the right to tell us what to do? As Christians we say, "God." Sometimes we add, "God alone!" All true. But in that answer are also the seeds of individualism, with everyone being their own authority according to their understanding of God.

We do have the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as recorded in the Scriptures. In them Jesus declared that his authority came from God: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18).

Realizing his physical presence on earth was short, Jesus passed on that authority to his disciples. Following Peter's confession, Jesus said to him, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church. . . . I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:18a-19).

Was that power just for Peter? Or is that authority for the church today?

Most of us would agree that Jesus' words are for us. And we are usually comfortable with that idea as long as the church is some nebulous entity out there somewhere. Things get sticky, however, when we begin to talk about God and Jesus and authority in terms of specific denominations, concrete area conferences, even our very own local congregation.

Yet talk about them we must. An undefined church is no church at all. If we really believe in the church as a visible expression of God's kingdom in our world today, then we must also come to see that we can only relate to God's authority in practical terms as we relate to the authority of that church.

This is where the questions come. For example, quite often these days I hear these: What is the authority of denominational position statements on such issues as abortion, human sexuality, biblical interpretation, and others? What right do conferences have to direct the practice of local congregations? Can congregations tell members how they should live?

James Lapp, then general secretary of the Mennonite Church General Board, had this answer to the authority question several months ago during a conference on the subject. In a voluntary association such as the church, said Lapp, any part of the structure only has the authority given to it. The denomination has the authority conferences give it. District conferences only have authority as congregations subscribe to them. And local congregations only know authority as individual members submit to them.

There is the answer to the authority question—in an unpopular word we use very little today: *submission.* In becoming Christians, we voluntarily submit ourselves to God, made visible in the life and teachings of Jesus as given to us in the Scriptures. This is not only an intellectual exercise. Our submission to the authority of God becomes concrete and everyday as we submit ourselves to the church.

How? The writer of Hebrews is direct: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account" (Heb. 13:17).

Perhaps the authority question is the wrong question. What we should be asking instead are submission questions:

- How do we submit to each other without insisting that we all become alike?
- What does submission mean when we disagree—particularly when we disagree about the very essentials of the Christian life?
- Are we called to submission when we're convinced the church is going wrong?

None of which are easy questions either. But they will get us further than asking, "Who has a right to tell me what to do?" For in a very real sense, when we submit ourselves to God, through the church of Jesus Christ, the answer to that question is: "Everyone has a right to tell me what to do!"—*jlp*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

God cannot be controlled or restricted to locations, nations, hierarchies, or ideologies. God cannot be found in temples or palaces. The place where God truly dwells is among those who follow God's ways.

Lessons from King Solomon:

Making the penultimate too important often leads to violence

Even when done in the name of service to God. God's priority is for humans to find healing and know love. Rules and doctrines are important but not ultimate.

by Ted Grimsrud

What happens when institutions, beliefs, and traditions become too important? That is, what happens when human things take the place of God?

An answer can be found in understanding the difference between the ultimate and the penultimate. The word penultimate means, "next to the ultimate." Something which is penultimate is nearly the most important thing—but not quite. For God's people, everything important is penultimate, except God. Our institutions, belief systems, and traditions are all important; at most, though, they are penultimate.

One test we can use to discern when something which is penultimate becomes too important is this: something is too important when it is used as a basis for committing violence against other human beings. God loves all people, and when we honor God, nothing else can overrule God's will that we follow God in loving all people.

The overall message of the Bible makes it

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Ted Koontz:
The gift of administration must not be taken for granted 6

Showalter named candidate for president of Goshen College 9

Mennonite mission agencies consider role of economics 10

The overall message of the Bible makes it clear that violence against other human beings in the name of service to God is a sign of idolatry, not of faithfulness.

clear that violence against other human beings in the name of service to God is a sign of idolatry, not of faithfulness. Violence against other human beings is a sign that something other than God is ultimate. Jesus made this clear—love your enemies, treat with compassion those with whom you disagree.

When we make penultimate things too important, we may easily be incited to violence to protect those things. Human religious institutions, cultures, and traditions have been given absolute status. When people feel protective of these "idols," they may unleash a great deal of fury.

We can better understand the story of King Solomon in the Old Testament by reflecting on how making penultimate things too important leads to violence. The story seems flattering to Solomon—though not so much if we read it closely. In doing so, we will see that Solomon was a sophisticated, power-seeking, ruthless leader. As much as anyone, he moved ancient Israel toward its tragic end of receiving God's judgment at the hands of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires.

Solomon was not his father David's legal heir. He had an older half-brother, Adonijah. Through shrewd scheming, though, Solomon became king. Those loyal to the older traditions sided with Solomon's brother; however, once Solomon gained control, he wasted no time in establishing his power and eliminating any potential opponents. He executed Adonijah and Adonijah's main ally, old Joab, who had been David's top general. Solomon sent Abiathar, a powerful priest who also supported Adonijah, into exile (1 Kings 2).

Once in power, Solomon expanded his authority. He centralized the social structures and instituted rigorous taxation to expand his treasury. He began to draft soldiers and to expand the collection of horses and chariots into a large, permanent army with career military leaders. He also instituted a policy of forced labor for his twenty-year building project of constructing the temple and his palace.

These practices went against what had been written about kings earlier. Deuteronomy reports that Israel's kings were explicitly commanded not to accumulate wealth for themselves (Deut. 17). Samuel warned that the kings would build standing armies, take the best of the produce of the people, and make them slaves (1 Sam. 8). This is precisely what Solomon did.

Solomon also cultivated ties with other countries. He had hundreds of women from many nations as wives—one of the great harems of all time. Perhaps Solomon was simply a terrific lover. His marriages were most likely for political purposes, and through his wives he enhanced his international status. Again, this is precisely what the king was told not to do. "He must not acquire many wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away" (Deut. 17:17). We read later in 2 Kings 11 that this is indeed what happened to Solomon. His many wives influenced him to worship other gods, and "his heart was not true to the Lord his God" (1 Kings 11:4).

The building of the temple played a major role in strengthening Solomon's power. It allowed him to control the religious practices by centering them in one place. The temple was also a way to contain God. Solomon proclaimed, "I have built [for] you [God] an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever" (1 Kings 8:13).

Traditionally, though, Israel did not understand God to dwell in a house, not even in an "exalted" house. Israel had understood God's sovereignty as something free and dynamic. God chose the poor and oppressed slaves in Egypt and liberated them from their bondage—challenging the king of Egypt and acting on behalf of those with little power and prestige. God acted to bring into being a people whose life would be ordered around God's justice which heals. This action could show the world what God's healing justice was like. This justice of God was utterly free from the control of kings, mighty people, and oppressors.

Solomon, though, in building up his empire and controlling Israel's economics and religion, subordinated God's sovereignty to his own. Penultimate things took priority over God. The king desired to hold on to power, to dominate others, and to have a safe, controlled, centralized religion. These were more important than genuine worship of God. The tragedy of Solomon is repeated often in the Bible. Sadly, it has been repeated in Christian history as well. Church people too often have placed control and conformity above love and respect.

The Bible directly challenges any tendency to make anything other than God and God's will ultimate. In response to the completion of Solomon's temple, God makes a promise: "If you turn aside from following me . . . and do not keep my commandments . . . but go and serve

other gods and worship them, then I will cut Israel off from the land; and the [temple] . . . I will cast out of my sight. . . . This [temple] will become a heap of ruins" (1 Kings 9:6-8).

This is indeed what happened—Solomon did turn aside from following God. By the time of the prophet Jeremiah several hundred years later, Israel was cut off from the land, and the temple did become a heap of ruins.

After the temple was destroyed, the people were in shock. They had been conditioned to think of God being contained within the temple. With that temple in ruins, does that mean that God is no more?

"No!" cries the prophet. Absolutely not. God is ultimate; the temple is not. God does not need Solomon's temple. "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool," God says. You cannot contain me within this house, within this temple which you have built with your hands. God cannot be controlled or restricted to certain locations, nations, hierarchies, or ideologies. God is not to be found in temples or palaces but among those who follow God's ways. "This is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:1-2).

Much later, John's Gospel and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians also challenge making human structures more important than God. In Jesus' time, the temple had been rebuilt by King Herod, who no doubt had similar motives to Solomon. It was a means of exerting control and gaining prestige. It served as the center for religious life.

John 2 tells us of a confrontation between Jesus and some of the temple leaders. Jesus identifies his own body as God's temple. He relativizes the significance of the temple building. That institution has little to do with God's presence in the world. God's presence in the world does not need a human building and cannot be controlled by priests and kings. God is present most of all in the life and ministry of Jesus.

With Jesus' death and ascension into heaven, the Holy Spirit is poured out among his followers. God's presence and temple has to do with the gift of the Spirit. God's presence is not limited to human-made temples and institutions.

Paul's words to the Corinthians tell us this: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?. . . God's temple is holy, and you are that temple" (1 Cor. 3:16-17). Paul undercuts everything Solomon and all other temple politicians have tried to enforce with their controlled access to God, their ideology, and their coercion.

God's genuine temple—the place where God is truly found—is the human being. We see this preeminently in Jesus, but Paul emphasizes that each person of faith shares this with Jesus. The Spirit of God, free and creative in its life-giving and persevering love, dwells in human hearts that trust in God's mercy.

Making penultimate things too important often leads to violence—even when this is done in the name of service to God. God's priority is on human beings finding healing and knowing God's love. Institutions, structures, rules, doctrines, and principles are all important parts of God's healing strategy; however, they are not the most important.

The prophet Hosea summarizes that which is most important: "I desire steadfast love [more than] sacrifice; the knowledge of God [more than] burnt offerings" (Hos. 6:6).

Ted Grimsrud copastors Salem Mennonite Church in Freeman, S.D., with his wife, Kathleen Temple. This article is based on a sermon he preached for that congregation.

"You have been born anew . . . through the living and enduring word of God. For 'All flesh is like grass. . . . The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever.' "—1 Peter 1:23-24

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Revival Fires and an Anabaptist Pilgrimage (Mar. 12). I appreciated John Roth's insight into both the strengths and the weaknesses of the revival meeting. Worth pondering are these notes on three powerful and essential messages of the revival format: (1) the reality of evil, (2) the necessity of public choice, and (3) the priority of grace over good works.

Have we marginalized these essential truths as we abandon the revival meeting? Could we have a follow-up article reflecting on what alternative structures or approaches could be used to teach these important truths in the absence of the revival meeting?

Marion Deckert
Newton, Kan.

Thank you for the articles on biblical interpretation (Mar. 19). Since we look to the Bible for answers on how to live faithfully, it is crucial that we talk about that process (which is not as simple as any of us would like to believe). Thank you for enabling this to happen.

I also appreciated your timely editorial, ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12). As I've read the Scriptures and listened to Christian brothers and sisters on this "issue," I too have heard God calling us to "wait."

A resource I have found helpful in my own journey is the book, *We Are the Pharisees,* by Kathleen Kern (Herald, 1995). It helps put some of these issues in a different (more Christian?) perspective.

Anne Meyer Byler
Champaign, Ill.

If Ryan Ahlgrim's principles were followed in ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19), we would certainly be more civil with each other. We might also be more inclined to follow Jesus' example rather than to argue so vehemently about items of marginal importance. Of course, even the word "marginal" needs interpretation!

Having grown up Amish, and having taught at a church college, I've heard endless recitals of what I would consider inappropriate principles of interpretation:

- "I didn't grow up believing that, so it can't be true."
- "If we accept this, where will it stop?"
- "Since someone with a Ph.D. said it, you must be suspicious."

Ironically, this problem is not unique to theology. I find many of the same quaint approaches in the finance classroom of the university.

It would seem that a central part of the gospel is about the possibility of change. Why is this so hard?

Thank you for a high quality article—and for a high quality periodical.

Ezra Byler
Normal, Ill.

I applauded the article, ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19) until I read the last sentence. That one blew my mind!

Of course, "the boundaries of God's kingdom are surprising and unknown." After all, we aren't God. But if the Holy Spirit is our interpreter and teacher (1 Cor. 12 and John 14 and 16) and the world does not see him or know him (John 14:17), why should we listen to "those outside the church"?

The 17 points of the article were good ones. But they should have had Scriptures for confirmation or examples.

Doris Martin
Gettysburg, Pa.

Many of what's listed in ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19) are good, but others are of more questionable value. Using the ones given, how does one avoid making the Bible say anything we want it to say by applying the principle that agrees with our bias and the life-long teaching and beliefs that we have?

Your editorial, ***Who Then Can Understand?*** attempts to answer that question. But it is quite evident that the Christian (Mennonite) church has not accomplished this.

Floyd L. Rheinheimer
Milford, Ind.

I was born into a somewhat traditional middle-class Mennonite family, went to a Mennonite church, and even graduated from a Mennonite college. I was president of my youth group and even received a degree in youth ministry. It seemed as if God had given me the green light to begin a successful career of church work.

Unfortunately, there were also

pieces of my life that would cause me to stumble and the choices I would make to lead me outside God's will. Since age 13, I have had an unnatural preoccupation with sex. This obsession went unchecked. It has poisoned my life in many areas, affecting my job, career, friends, family, church, hopes, and dreams. It's drained my finances and even gotten me into jail.

Sexual addiction is not something people are willing to talk about. I would like to be able to honestly and openly talk about this issue, but few if any seem to be able to listen without judging.

Oh yes, there is counseling. But after four psychiatrists, eight counselors, and over a dozen psychologists, I'm tired of people telling me I have a problem. I already know this.

What I would like is for some open discussion with other Mennonites who aren't afraid to talk about sexual addiction. A men's support group (that doesn't charge $65 an hour) would also be helpful.

I wish I could give my name and address, but I do not wish to dishonor my parents and my church.

Name withheld by request

A phrase in ***Jesus Slipped into Jerusalem by Having a Parade!*** (Mar. 26) irritated me: "thumb his nose." In my opinion, it is sacrilegious to denigrate Christ to such lower human life to suggest he would do this. It appalls me that an editor of a church publication would print it.

T. M. Klopfenstein
Elkhart, Ind.

The news story, ***Integration Committee Recommends Name for New Merged Mennonite Denomination*** (Apr. 2) was incorrect to say that "Canadian members pointed out that in recent discussions about integrating voluntary service, no one had been present from their country."

In the Jan. 30-31 meeting in St. Louis, all staff working in service programs were present, including Brad Reimer, Mennonite Voluntary Service associate director for Canada, whose office is in Winnipeg. MVS staff present also included two other Canadian citizens. When the discussion expanded from the staff level to the commission-board level, the Resources Commission of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada was included in the discussion as well as the Commission on Home Ministries and Mennonite Board of Missions.

Lois Barrett
Commission on Home Ministries
Newton, Kan.

We will soon be baptizing a new century, and already questions about our identity have been filling the pages of *Gospel Herald*. May I suggest that our best hope is in our youth.

The best source of leadership in the Mennonite Church is found in the halls of our church colleges. That's why I get a bit tired of hearing people discourage youth from attending Mennonite colleges because they may be in danger of losing their faith. On the contrary, is there a better place to find it?

It is sobering to realize that only about 45 percent of Mennonite young people go to college. Even more sobering yet is the fact that only 14 percent of this group attend a Mennonite college. This is not to say there are not some good non-Mennonite colleges, but we are talking about the future identity, witness, and existence of the Mennonite Church. If we could increase that 14 percent to just 25 percent, would not our congregations be revitalized? And the questions about who we will be in the next century may not be so troublesome.

Let me be presumptuous enough to make a few suggestions:

1. We adults must take a hard look at our value systems. What kind of role models are we parading before our youth?

2. Every Mennonite congregation should give top priority to establishing and promoting students loans and scholarships for its youth.

3. Every Mennonite conference should assume responsibility for promoting, and maybe even financing, Mennonite high education. It could also serve as a liaison between church agencies, the business community, and congregations for employment of Mennonite college graduates.

4. We should also pray for the administrators, staff, and faculty of our colleges—that they have the wisdom, patience, longsuffering, goodness, and everything else it takes to be God's instruments of grace and truth on today's campuses.

D. Lowell Nissley
Sarasota, Fla.

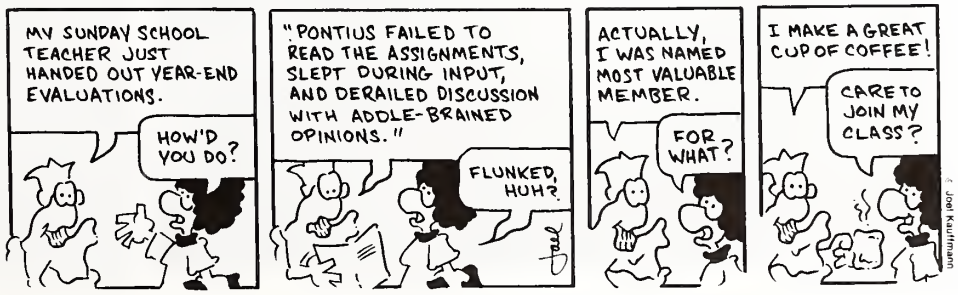
I want to share my appreciation for the renewed hope I have received from reading *Gospel Herald*. ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12) and ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19)—as well as the plethora of positive letters in response—have been a real encouragement to me.

Although I tend to feel rather negative towards the Promise Keepers movement, I did find some positive things in the letters signed by 75 clergy (Apr. 9). They apparently have discovered the riches that lie in diversity of race, denomination, and theology. I hope they can continue to expand their appreciation for this diversity, especially on issues of differing ideas, women's role in the church, and persons of different sexual orientation.

I also agree that the 16th century was then and this is now. The same must be said, however, for 2,000 and 6,000 years ago. Our theology needs to be allowed to stay relevant so that it can remain central for generations to come.

Kevin G. Landis
Harleysville, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle



A covenant of love in church institutions:

The gift of administration must

Thank God for good administrators! But there must be a way we in the church can walk with them more supportively.

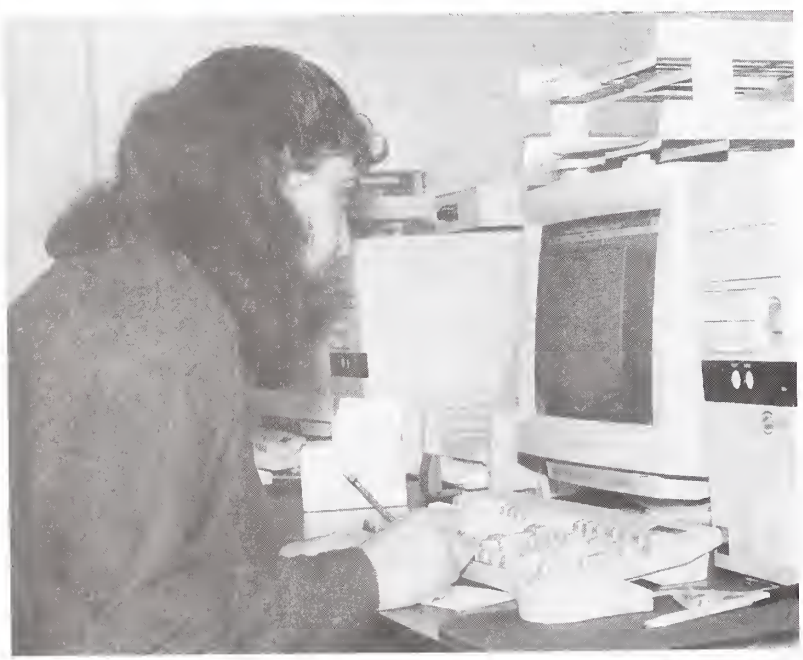
by Ted Koontz

When my wife, Gayle, was thrust into the role of acting president at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary last year after the death of president Marlin Miller, I found myself thinking about my relationship to those in authority over me in some new ways.

As a member of the faculty at AMBS, I found that much which I had assumed could not be assumed. I found that much that I thought mattered actually mattered little, and that things I had hardly noticed mattered much. I found myself seeing some things much more clearly. So despite the awful pain of Marlin's loss, I found myself almost dreading a return to "normalcy," for in normal times we often fail to attend to what is most central.

What we need most in our church institutions is a covenant of love in which administrators and employees care deeply for the well-being of each other.

"What can we learn from this tragedy?" I asked. "What are the things I regret about how I related to Marlin? What are the things I am grateful for? What do I expect and need from my primary administrators? And what do I pledge to give to them—what do I owe them?"



I have come to feel that what we need most in the institutional life of our church is a covenant between administrators and employees—a covenant of love. It cannot be a contract. It cannot be prescribed or demanded, or legally or institutionally enforced. Perhaps a "covenant of love" sounds too intimate—my choice of terms is no doubt shaped by my relationships with these particular administrators. But I do not mean a covenant of love to suggest mainly a warm sentiment or even, necessarily, a close personal relationship. I mean rather a deep care for the well-being of the other—a care which enables the other to carry out his or her tasks with energy and joy.

A covenant has two sides—it is a set of pledges to one another. As I have reflected on this covenant of love, I have asked myself, "What do I need from my administrators? What do I want my administrators to give me?"

I need my supervisor's blessing in my vocation. I do what I do out of a sense of calling, and I need to know that my supervisor believes my presence here is a right response to my calling. In other words, I need affirmation. I need to be told what I do right, not only what I do wrong.

I need honest communication. I do need to be told what I do wrong. I need straight, clear, and loving feedback on my failings—and on my future with the institution. I need to be told if others do not see me as suited for or called to my role. I also want to know the state of the institution and its future, because my life is bound up with it.

I need a sense of participation in and ownership of the enterprise to which I am giving my life's energies. I need the opportunity to speak on issues that affect me personally and also on larger matters of institutional direction. I care about our mission; that is why I am here. I need to have the sense that I am being listened to, even though I know that administrators will not always agree with my point of view. I want my administrators to be approachable, through formal and informal channels.

I need leadership and decision-making. In many settings I am frustrated by timid leaders. I need administrators who will take the risk and responsibility of leading—people who listen to not only the various human voices around them but to God's voice—and then propose courses of action based on that listening. This does not mean I want autocratic leaders.

not be taken for granted

Before decisions are made, I need clarity about where and how they will be made and how I can have input into them. When proposals are brought and decisions are made, I want clear rationales for them, including some understanding of what other major options were considered and why they were rejected. But the burden of leadership is responsibility to lead.

I need respect. I need administrators who assume that I care about our mission, that I want the good of the whole, and that when I speak, I speak out of concern for our mission. I want them to see me as one who cares passionately about our future, and not only as a member of a "pressure group" representing a set of interests.

I know that my administrators have sometimes failed to give me all of what I need and want from them. Nevertheless, I am struck by how well they have done in blessing me. When I realize this rather than take it for granted, I am grateful.

Reflecting on these matters these months has humbled and grieved me, however. I have seen more clearly the ways in which I have failed to give them what I believe I owe them in a covenant of love. Leadership in church institutions is often not an easy task. And too frequently people who work in those institutions make it difficult—I make it difficult. Reflecting on these matters in the wake of Marlin's death and my walk with Gayle these last years has caused me to do some mourning and some repenting. It also caused me to formulate and attempt to live out the following pledges to my administrators.

I pledge to give a blessing. I want to remember administrators regularly in prayer and to check in with them regularly. I intend to speak some specific word of encouragement to them at least monthly, either orally or in writing. I want them to know that I value the life's energy they are giving to my institution, and that I pray routinely for the blessing of God to be evident in their work and life. I pray that their work will be life-giving to them and not draining. I promise to cultivate a spirit in me which sees them as one of God's good gifts to me.

As I look back on my relationship with Marlin, nothing gives me greater pain than remembering those times when I forgot to pray for him or when I knew he was weighed down by a hard matter and did not communicate my care to him. And nothing eases the pain of his loss more than remembering those times when I did communicate "blessing" to him from the heart. I have come to see praying for "those in authority" over me in a new light. I hope I will not forget what I have seen when times are again "normal."

I pledge to give honest feedback. I know that administrators may be unaware of what employees are thinking and saying. I intend to be clear about my views and feelings. I don't want to let things build up inside me so that a silent, invisible barrier prevents communication. I pledge to speak up when I am disturbed about something or when I see them becoming weighed down—seeking to remember at the same time that they are busy. I do not want to burden them with every little problem or idea. I pledge to seek to discern what is important to say and what is not.

I pledge to respect their charge—a charge given by the church to shape our mission and overall direction of our life together. I confess that it is easy for me to assume that I see things more clearly than they do. I seek to respect their mandate to lead. But I will seek to do so even when I disagree. I will try to remember that when they disagree with my "wisdom" it is not necessarily because they have not listened to me—it may mean that they have listened to me and to others who disagree with me.

I promise to work at remembering that their position will often cause you to view things differently than I do. I will keep in mind the saying, "Where you stand depends upon where you sit." I will try to remember that their "seat" usually gives them a better vantage point for making judgments about our overall life together than does my "seat" and to give them the benefit of the doubt. I will try to remember that no matter how much I seek to consider the good of the whole, my vantage point limits my vision.

I pledge a spirit of teamwork. I have noticed how easy it is for an adversarial assumption to creep into our relationship. Because administrators have larger overall responsibility, they also have more power. It is easy for me to feel resentful of that and to feel ignored, unappreciated, unheard, sometimes even exploited. It is easy for me to develop a "we-they" mentality in which administrators become the opponent. It is easy for me, with my training in international relations, to see everything as a power contest and to dismiss the views of others cynically as representing their "interests." Perspectives such as these do more to undermine the spirit of cooperation in an insti-

(continued on page 8)

Brazilian seminary students found less political than predecessors

A study of 3,850 seminary students in Brazil, considered by many to be the birthplace of liberation theology, has found current students to be less political and more evangelical than previous students. According to the survey, conducted by the Brazilian's bishop conference, the number who say they want to work among the poor, homeless, and migrants has dropped 50 percent over the past several years. A report by the news agency of Latin American and Caribbean churches says seminarians consider liberation theology to be "something of the past."—*National Catholic Reporter*

Irish churches send more than 500,000 postcards for peace

The Irish Council of Churches and Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland are encouraging their members to send postcards with the words "No More Violence" to a Northern Ireland radio station. After recent Irish Republican Army attacks in England, a Quaker couple called their local station and suggested the idea on air. More than 500,000 postcards have been sent, and the group hopes to collect one million cards and present them to leading politicians.—*National and International Religion Report*

Hong Kong churches make changes in anticipation of crackdown

The Mennonite churches in Hong Kong are adopting a cell church structure so that the church would be able to continue should the Chinese government crack down on the church after China reclaims Hong Kong in 1997. According to George Veith, mission worker to Hong Kong with the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church, "if pastors are arrested, the church can go on."

At a recent COM meeting, Veith said that he is thankful that all of the congregational leadership in Hong Kong is indigenous so that "the Chinese government can't say it is being steered by the West."—*General Conference Mennonite Church*

Cuba churches face challenges of rapid church growth

Thousands of new attenders have caught Cuba churches unprepared. According to Rafael Cepeda of Cuba's Presbyterian Reformed Church, many who thought Cuba's revolution would fulfill their needs are now turning to Christianity. Some of these are old members returning after 30 years, while others have had no previous contact with churches. Cepeda said the churches need to accommodate the rapid influx of new members, many of whom are professionals interested in a charismatic worship style. He also reminded the churches not to reject issues linked to political and social commitments.—*Reformed Ecumenical Council*

The gift of administration must not be taken for granted

(continued from page 7)

tution than anything else. I pledge to remind myself, again and again, that we are on the same team working toward a common end.

My observation of Marlin and my life with Gayle have left me with other questions about what a covenant of love between the church and its administrators might look like. These are larger than my personal relationships with and attitudes toward administrators. They are questions for the wider church, and especially for boards which oversee primary administrators.

In a time of cutting back in many institutions, how do we avoid a work overload for top administrators? I know that the hours Marlin gave to his work far exceeded any reasonable expectation. I know that AMBS kept telling him to slow down. But we also kept telling him, "This needs doing, that needs doing." He was not one to complain or to ask others to take on more—at least until he had already done so. In this way, he led by example. He also tended to ask too much of himself to miss the first message and to hear the second. Perhaps that was his problem. But how can we avoid giving these double messages?

I also know that life for primary administrators is often lonely. It is routine that the hardest things that administrators face are things that cannot be shared in the circles they normally turn to for support. How do we provide administrators with personal, emotional, and spiritual support? And how do we make sure that there are at least a few people who know them well enough to help ease the burden, to notice when the weight is too much, and to speak for them and be heard?

God has given the church many gifts, and among them is the gift of administration. It is a gift which often is taken for granted. I am grateful that I see this gift more clearly and value it more highly these last months. Thank God for good administrators! But I wonder if there are ways we can walk more supportively with them and lighten the hard work they do on our behalf.

Ted Koontz teaches ethics and peace studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He and Gayle are parents of three children and attend Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen.

Showalter recommended for president of Goshen

Goshen, Ind.—Shirley H. Showalter is being recommended as the next president of Goshen (Ind.) College.

Chair of the presidential search committee Sherm Kauffman announced that Showalter, professor of English at Goshen, has been invited to be a candidate for the position, according to an article in the April 12 *Goshen News.*

Decision in a couple of weeks. Showalter, currently on sabbatical at the University of North Carolina, visited campus April 15-16 to meet with faculty, staff, and students. The search committee will receive feedback from the visit and make a recommendation to the board of overseers, who will then make a recommendation to the Mennonite Board of Education. The final decision should come in a couple of weeks, according to Kauffman in the *Goshen News.*

Showalter is the only candidate, he said.

Current president Victor Stoltzfus is retiring at the end of the school year. If Showalter receives the appointment, she will have a six-month preparation period, most likely beginning July 1. Interim president Henry Weaver will serve until the new president takes over.

"Showalter combines a deep commitment to the Mennonite Church and its ministries, open and prayerful spirituality centered in Jesus Christ, and a creative passion for excellence in Christian education," Kauffman said. "As a member of the Goshen College faculty for 20 years, she has been a leader in curricular innovation, has won and admininstered major grants, and has been a popular teacher among students."

Fresh vision. "The search committee is confident that as Showalter applies these gifts to the task of presidential leadership both on and off campus, she will bring fresh vision of the college's future and a clear voice to its long-standing values," Kauffman added.

Showalter has taught 20 years in the Goshen College English department. She graduated from Eastern Mennonite College and earned master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Texas.

She and Stuart, professor of communication at Goshen, have two children, Anthony and Kate.

David Sierra, a sophomore at Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., salvages a piece of building material among wreckage from the flood in his state in February. Students and faculty teamed up with Mennonite Disaster Service to help with cleanup.

Mennonites help to clean up flood-stricken West

Akron, Pa. (MDS-WMS)—"We're used to floods, but this one was different," Tillamook County, Ore., dairy farmers say.

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) still needs volunteers for its work on the West Coast following the devastating floods in the region in February. Hours of torrential downpours, massive snow melt from the nearby coast range, and persistently high westerly winds all contributed to the floods. Tillamook and other northwestern counties in Oregon are affected, as well as parts of southwest Washington. People along the river and in the town were evacuated from their homes by boat and even helicopter at the height of the storm.

MDS responds. Dairy farmers had little opportunity to relocate their herds, and some lost animals, one as many as 70 head. Cows could not be milked or fed for several days, causing sickness and a decrease in milk production which will continue for months.

MDS is responding to this disaster in Tillamook County and Woodland. Most of the cleaning in the houses has been completed, and they are drying and waiting to be repaired. Houses will need new interior walls, insulation, painting, and floor repair. In addition to house repairs, MDS will do some fence repair and perhaps some field cleanup.

Students from Western Mennonite School in Salem, Ore., teamed up with MDS and the Red Cross to help flood victims. Nearly half the student body, along with the faculty, participated in the cleanup effort. Principal Eric Martin says, "I think we were blessed more than we helped as we turned some of the disappointment of our own misfortune into restoring hope among others."—*Hope and Cliff Lind and Stephanie Snyder*

Choice Books board advises new structure

Harrisonburg, Va. (MBM)—Members of the Choice Books Annual Leadership Conference (ALC) recently agreed almost unanimously to recommend to their sponsoring agencies and the board of directors of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) that the ALC form a limited liability company as a new entity for Choice Books, to be operational by Jan. 1, 1998.

Acting on MBM's earlier request that the Choice Books partners explore new organizational options, current distributor partners would likely own and operate the central organization and new entity. The group also recommended that MBM transfer ownership of the Choice Books trademark to the new entity.

Choice Books' 34-year-old ministry places inspirational books in secular stores. Last year nine distributors sold a record 1.58 million books (an 11 percent increase over 1994), an average rate of 4,330 books per day.

The various partners in Choice Books are linked to Beachy Amish, Brethren in Christ, Church of the Brethren, Conservative Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren, and Mennonite Church constituencies.

Mission agencies explore economics

Platte City, Mo. (MEDA)—What role should economics play in Mennonite missions? This was the theme of a recent meeting of the Council of International Ministries (CIM), an association of 16 Mennonite mission agencies.

Thirteen of the agencies were represented when CIM met here March 29-30. While CIM's main goal is to provide communication and fellowship among the various agencies, part of this meeting's agenda was to fashion closer ties with Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), which specializes in overseas micro-enterprise development.

Furthering growth of churches. With the help of economics and mission professors, the group explored how such economic development work could address poverty and further the growth of national churches.

Economist James Halteman related today's economic issues to those of biblical times, showing how development can play a role in transformational ministries. He explained how capital investment expands the economic base, enabling more of the poor to become self-sustaining.

Missiologist Samuel Escobar said a wholistic view of mission calls Christians to share both spiritual life and material resources and to utilize spiritual, cultural, and technological tools.

It was agreed in discussion that while mission agencies strive for all people to encounter Jesus, it is also God's will that people come out of poverty. "MEDA and the church have unlimited opportunities to help the urban poor by providing small business training and making available small loans," said MEDA president Ben Sprunger. "Creating work opportunities can be done in the name of Christ, just as our mission agencies have offered health care, education, and agricultural training."

Support and respect. "The most significant thing that happened was the building of relationships with people who are the CEOs of other mission agencies," said Garry Frieb, executive secretary of Africa Inter-Mennonite Missions, of the CIM meeting.

John Lapp, outgoing executive director of Mennonite Central Committee, agreed. "The mission agency heads are continuing to build a community of mutual support and respect," he said.

'Pictures at an exhibition.' *Cleveland, Ohio*—Four-year-old Rachel Stoltzfus, daughter of Art and Regina Shands Stoltzfus, looks at a painting by James Spearman at an art exhibit and sale at Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland, Ohio, on March 30. The exhibit helped to raise money for ten people from the congregation who plan to travel to Nigeria. Spearman, a Detroit-based artist, focuses on images from African and African-American cultures in his art. He donated portions of the proceeds toward the trip—part of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) effort to connect people across continents and cultures. After a visit with an MCC-sponsored Nigerian women's group called The Servant Singers, members at Lee Heights began working on a return visit to the African nation. Event coordinator Rick Spearman, cousin of the artist and a member at Lee Heights says, "We're going as people affected positively. The spirit that the Servant Singers brought was so overwhelming."—*Steve Kriss*

Forty people 'engage the powers' in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. (MCC)—They came here to the nation's capital from California and Illinois, Indiana and Nebraska, New York and Pennsylvania—40 in all—to discuss how Mennonites and Brethren in Christ can interact with government officials. "Engaging the Powers," the annual spring seminar of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Washington Office, took place on March 30-April 2.

Participants ranged from high school seniors to Seniors for Peace, from church peace and justice committee members to college students.

The seminar began with an address from Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois. After commending the actions of Mennonites around the world, Simon discussed how personal faith applies to politics. He described how his Lutheran faith affects political positions he takes on a vast array of issues—from responsible welfare and health care reform, to foreign aid and reduced military spending. Simon also cautioned against personal faith affiliations being used to ostracize others in the political process.

Wilma Bailey of Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., spoke on the biblical roots for Anabaptist advocacy. Bailey outlined the changing positions Anabaptist theologians have taken and drew on scriptural examples to outline an argument for biblical-based advocacy today.

Seminar participants were exposed to ways that faith-based organizations undertake advocacy. They participated in workshops on various political issues like the Peace Tax Fund and international economics. The seminar concluded with participants making visits to their congressional representatives' offices.

—*Reina C. Neufeldt*

Illinois Mennonites visit Argentine congregations

Choele Choel, Argentina (MBM)—Congregations in North America interact with Christians in other countries primarily through mission and relief organizations. But the Illinois Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), and the Argentina Mennonite Conference are drawing some new lines of communication in Argentina.

For two weeks in March, eight members of churches in the Illinois Mennonite Conference traveled to the Patagonia region of southern Argentina to visit the people and churches here.

Common vision. Members of the two groups from two hemispheres found they shared a common vision for mission. "What excited me most about the idea of this trip was the vision the church here [in Argentina] has," says Lester Zook, pastor of the Waldo Mennonite Church in Flanagan, Ill. "I wondered what would happen if our churches in the United States would catch this same vision."

Until now, the relationship of the groups has been more distant. Whenever the churches in Illinois wanted to give financial resources to a project in Argentina, the designated funds were sent to MBM, which then sent the funds to the Argentine Mennonite Conference. From there, the funds were distributed to the appropriate projects. There was little or no direct contact between the giving church and the receiving church.

The primary goal for all groups in this new model is to build relationships while growing in understanding of one another's language, culture, and traditions. In 1997, a group from Argentina will travel to Illinois to experience the United States and the context of Mennonites in North America. The intent is for an exchange to happen for several weeks each year, alternating between North and South America.

The groups have agreed that those traveling to either Argentina or the United States will not be the same. "We need to expose as many members of our congregations as possible to a firsthand experience in Argentina so they know where and for whom our mission work is being done," says Cal Kaufman, pastor of the East Bend Mennonite Church in Fisher, Ill.

"We have so many modern conveniences in the United States, so many things that take our focus away from God," Zook says. "They don't have that there, and we need to learn more about it if we want to be faithful to God's call as Christians."

This encounter between the Patagonia Argentines and the Illinois Mennonites is a part of a larger vision for mission partnership being fostered by MBM. In an attempt to bring North American conferences and congregations closer to churches in other countries, MBM encourages interchanges and exchanges similar to those beginning between the Illinois churches and the Patagonia churches.

Church planting. One of the first joint projects will be a church plant that is well under way in the southern Argentina city of Comodoro Rivadavia. The Patagonian churches have gathered just over $5,000 of the nearly $10,000 they anticipate needing to buy a vacant lot on which to build their mission church house.

The project in Comodoro Rivadavia is the first major church planting in the south by Argentine churches in the north. Mennonite congregations already worship in Choele Choel, Neuquen, Roca, Conesa, Sarmiento, and Caleta Olivia.—*Christy Risser*

Producing an opera with two casts might be astonishing in any circumstances, but for Charlotte Stegmann, assistant professor of music at Goshen (Ind.) College, it was almost a miracle. Stegmann was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in July 1995 and told she would live six months to a year. In February she produced *Pirates of Penzance* at Goshen, and the cancer was in remission.

Stegmann says campus support contributed to her recovery. After undergoing chemotherapy and then recuperating in Ohio, Stegmann returned to Goshen in October. "Probably over 100 students gathered in my driveway with little lights and candles and serenaded us. They sang hymns for me for about half an hour," she says.—*Ryan Miller and Wayne Steffen*

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A new CD by a Mennonite is getting rave reviews. Anthony Brown, member of Seattle (Wash.) Mennonite Church, recently released the compact disc recording "Anthony Brown Sings Spirituals." It features 18 African American spirituals "sung by a warm and noble baritone with the same care a singer lavishes on German lieder and French chansons," writes a reviewer in *The Seattle Times*. Brown is a counselor and has been an oratorio and operatic soloist. He sang at the opening and closing adult sessions of Wichita '95.—*submitted by Lucy Harms*

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"How does one return blessing for evil even in the aftermath of a terrorist attack?" asked Garry Denlinger, an instructor with Mennonite Board of Missions at a college in Tel Aviv, Israel. The Hamas terrorist suicide bombings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem that left almost 60 dead prompted Denlinger to show a Mennonite World Conference video on peacemaking in his class of Messianic Jews. In the discussion following "Ekklesia Peacemaking: Healing and Hope," none of the students "attempted to give simple or superficial issues but instead volunteered some touching personal peacemaking stories," says Denlinger. They closed the discussion with prayer that both Jews and Arabs would cease violence and consider spiritual values.—*Melodie Davis*

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A challenge from one church member at Pine Creek Chapel, Arcadia, Fla., resulted in hiring a pastor for two years. In order to obtain a full-time pastor for the twelve-member congregation in 1993, one member made a commitment to match the amount of money the rest of the congregation raised to pay for a pastor for two years. A minister came, and the church completed a building recently that seats 200. It will serve as a hurricane shelter.—*Paul A. Kaufman*

Gospel Herald receives two professional awards

Phoenix, Ariz.—The Mennonite Church's weekly publication has received a first-place award for its 1995 series, "Core Beliefs of Our Faith." The award came from the Associated Church Press during its annual convention here April 10-13.

Gospel Herald's "core beliefs" series was judged the best out of 38 entries in the "theological reflection" category. Said the judge:

"This series of 16 pieces is a sustained, disciplined reflection on the key doctrines and concepts of the Mennonite faith. Most pieces draw on or are in dialogue with the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, which strengthens the piece for this particular audience."

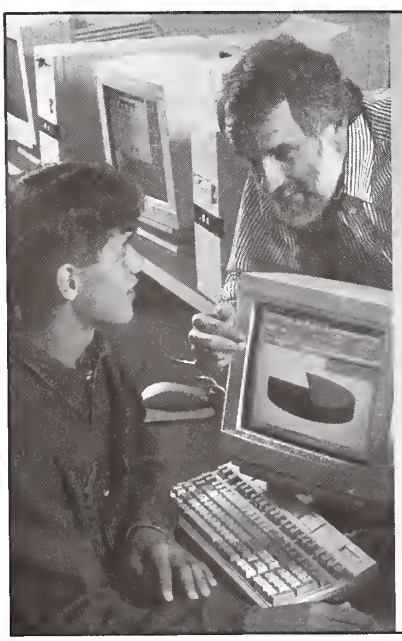
The judge continued: "The authors make well-grounded theological concepts available to their readers in a way that is accessible and yet at the same time would challenge readers to abandon any simplistic and unreflective views."

At the ACP convention, *Gospel Herald* also received an honorable mention in the "humor" category for "The Top Ten Unacknowledged Reasons Why Mennonites Don't Join the Army" by Randall J. Roth and Ryan Ahlgrim in the March 7, 1995, issue.

Another Mennonite publication also received two ACP awards. *The Mennonite*, the semiweekly publication of the General Conference Mennonite Church, received a first place for poetry and a second for its coverage of Wichita '95.

Some 200 religious publications are members of the Associated Church Press. ACP promotes fellowship and "higher standards of religious journalism."

'The needle's eye that doth supply . . .' *Intercourse, Pa.*—"Mennonite Quilts of Lancaster County: The Women, Their Stories, Their Heirlooms" runs through Nov. 2 at the People's Place Quilt Museum, Intercourse, Pa. Antique quilts are combined with historic photographs and family heirlooms of the women who made the quilts to present the personal stories of Mennonite women from 1855-1935. Vintage dresses, handmade dolls, sunbonnets, and wedding rings belonging to the quilters are among the heirlooms in the exhibit. "The Mennonite women in Lancaster County during this period were not deliberate about storytelling," says museum consultant Joanne Hess Siegrist. "They were hard workers who believed it was better to work with their hands than to spend too much time on 'frivolous' activities like documenting their thoughts and feelings or writing down family stories." The quilt exhibit aims to present these stories alongside of the quilts, clothing, and keepsakes that the women produced with their hands.



Caring faculty.

"What I find most rewarding about teaching are the 'aha!' moments, when we gain new insights. I enjoy talking one-on-one with students about current issues and about their future careers. In the business and economics department, our office doors are never closed."

—Rick Yoder, *economics professor*

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EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

- **MCCers leave Bubanza.** The governor of the Bubanza province, Burundi, asked Mennonite Central Committee workers Keith Miller and Susan Seitz to leave that area last week because he could no longer assure their safety. Reports indicate that militia activity in the countryside is again increasing after a brief lull in December. Miller and Seitz plan to return to Kibimba, another town in Burundi where they had previously worked in community organizing and education.

- **Mission worker dies.** Izelma de Azevedo, serving in Hong Kong with Eastern Mennonite Missions and Commission on Overseas Mission, died Apr. 7 of a heart attack. Azevedo, 27, of Recife, Brazil, was studying Cantonese in Hong Kong since October in preparation for service in Macau, Asia, in July 1996.

- **Faith and Life makes cuts.** With a mandate to "bring Faith & Life Press (FLP) into long-term financial viablility," the FLP leadership task force, appointed by the Commission on Education, has cut several staff positions in order to reduce operating expenses by $114,000. FLP, publisher for the General Conference Mennonite Church, had to borrow $180,000 from the General Conference to cover expenses in 1995. Three positions were eliminated—director of marketing and sales, held by Mark Regier, and mail clerk, held by Galen Harms, ended as of April 5. A vacant support services position will not be filled. Several positions were also reduced to part-time.

- **Correction.** Technology is great when it works—but in the Apr. 16 issue of *Gospel Herald*, it failed us. Page 9 of last week's issue showed a book cover rather than a photograph of Paul Pereverzoff, the Mennonite Central Committee worker who helped distribute aid in Iraq.

- **Youth convention plans underway.** The theme for the Orlando 97 youth convention will be "God's Kingdom: Beyond Illusion." A 14-member planning committee began work in late January to develop the theme, plan a schedule, and make decisions about speakers for the convention. It will be sponsored by the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries.

- **New appointments:**
Keith Blank, director of Eastern Mennonite Missions Discipleship Ministries, Salunga, Pa.
Erma Brunk, human resource coordinator and administrative assistant to director, Mennonite Board of Missions media offices, Harrisonburg, Va.

- **Pastor transitions:**
Norman Yutzy was installed as interim pastor at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., on Jan. 28.

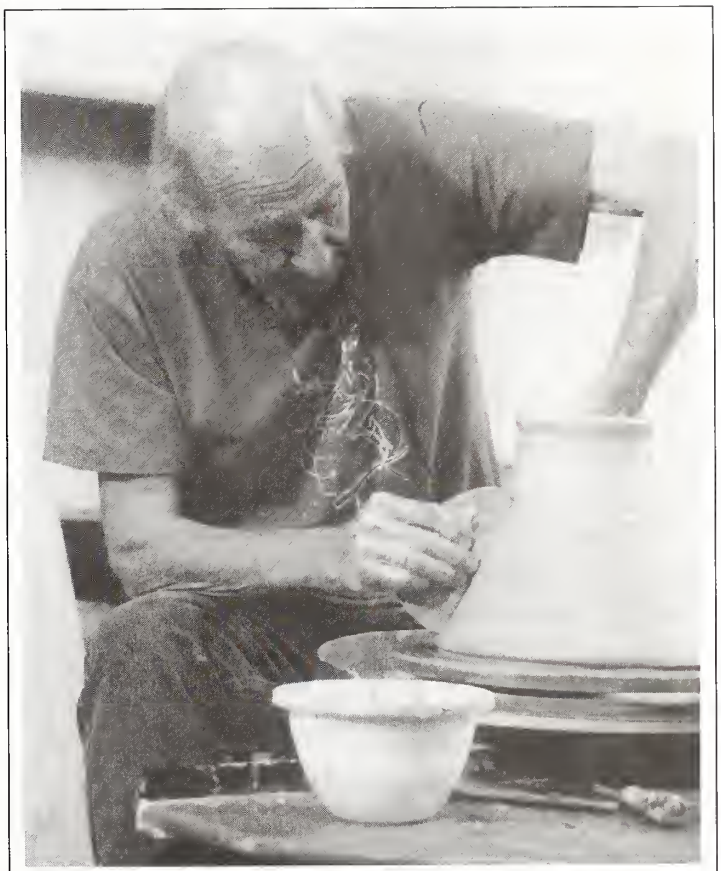
- **Missionary transitions:**
Harold and Miriam Houseman returned to the United States on Apr. 12 after serving two years with Eastern Mennonite Missions in Nigeria. Their address is 15 Savo Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17601.

- **Coming events:**
Mediation skills training, Birmingham (Mich.) First United Methodist Church, May 6-10. Sponsored by Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. More information available from 708 627-5310.
Outdoor setting workshop, Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa., June 5-7. Sterling Edwards will lead the weekend about nature programs for youth and young adult program directors, staff training personnel, nature resource persons, and outdoor education specialists of Christian camps. Reservations available from 717 595-7505.
Asia peace tour, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee, beginning Jan. 3. The ten-member group will travel to Calcutta, India, to attend Mennonite World Conference and visit Cambodia and the Philippines. Participants pay own costs. More information available from 717 859-1151.

- **New books:**
Peaceful Parenting in a Violent World by Joseph N. Cress and Burt Berlowe offers hundreds of nonviolent parenting techniques and describes how communities are organizing to promote nonviolence. Order from Perpective Publications at 612 822-4809.

- **New resources:**
Nonviolence in a Violent World is a new video available from Mennonite Central Committee. Five teenagers talk about how they reacted when involved in a violent incident. A discussion guide for junior and senior high youth is included with the 40-minute video. Contact MCC at 717 859-1151 for a free loan. Also available for purchase.

- **Job openings:**
Resource coordinator, Mennonite Central Committee Central States, North Newton, Kan. Two-year position is available June 18. Qualifications include communication, organizational, and public-speaking skills. Applications due May 10. Contact Prem Dick or Goldie Kuhns at 717 859-1151.
Staff openings, Beaver Camp, Lowville, N.Y. Facility manager is a full-time position with overall responsibility for camp facilities. Cook/housekeeper is full-time during summer and part-time the rest of the year. Salaried and voluntary service applications accepted. Call 315 376-2640 for job descriptions and applications.
Staff openings, Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore. Openings include science instructor, head girls and boys resident directors, assistant girls and boys resident directors, girls volleyball coach, girls basketball coach, and boys soccer coach. More information available from Eric Martin at 503 363-2000.



Claying around. *Hesston, Kan.*—World-renown ceramic artist Paul Soldner throws a pot during "Two Days of Clay," a series of ceramics workshops and lectures at Hesston (Kan.) College and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Soldner closed his final workshop on March 29 by assembling into a single sculpture a variety of clay slabs formed by Hesston and Bethel students. He graduated from Bluffton (Ohio) College, the University of Colorado in Boulder, and Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles.

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NEW MEMBERS

Boyertown, Pa.: Lisa Breidigan, Jessica Hackman, Joe Melander, Kelly Mest, Nick Perich II, Katie Schueck, and Jeremy Shenk.

Capital Christian Fellowship, Laurel, Md.: Rick Campbell, Charles Crawford, Jennie Davis, Simeon Gagno, Patrick and Pauline Greaves, Nikki Greaves, Joe and Pam Kaye, Harmony Kaye, Selah Kaye, Noah Kaye, Caleb Kaye, Brian and Anne Quinn, and Brian and Sharon Smith.

Dayspring Christian Fellowship, North Canton, Ohio: Susan Graber.

First, Middlebury, Ind.: Mary Petersheim, Ken and Leona Gingerich, Joshua Gingerich, Salissa Schrock, Alyson Troyer, Cristina Rheinheimer, Brian Mullet, Allen Rhodes, Derek Miller, Randy Miller, Jacqueline Damon, Michelle Kujawski, Jason Hosler, Jamie Ritchie, Kelly Troyer, Betty Yoder, Don and Marlene Schrock, Bob and Darlene Kujawski, and Jim and Elaine Damon.

Grace, Berlin, Ohio: Dale Miller and Marlin Stutzman.

Kingview, Scottdale, Pa.: Ruthie DeLuca, Dianne Miller, Elizabeth Miller, Jill Shenk, Kent and Stephanie Hartzler, and Eric Wenger.

Masonville, Washington Boro, Pa.: Cynthia Burkholder, Kristen Burkholder, and Stacie Spangler.

Nith Valley, New Hamburg, Ont.: Amanda Cressman, Mary Anne Cressman, Sara Cressman, Anthony Richardson, Melissa Traendlin, and Donald Wilgress.

Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.: Sherrill Kauffman Glanzer.

Rossmere, Lancaster, Pa.: Bill Brown, Jeremy Brubaker, Christopher Blank, Charissa Blank, Jesse Blank, Stephanie Landis, Jason Landis, Malinda Stoner, Sarah Stoltzfus, Zel Stoltzfus, Glenn Stoltzfus, and Jane Stoltzfus.

Trissels, Broadway, Va.: Charlie Fusco, Kate Fusco, Evelyn King, James M. Showalter, and Carol Showalter.

Walnut Creek, Ohio: Brian and Lynette Plank, Jay and Joyce Waidelich, and Wayne Beachy.

Zion, Hubbard, Ore.: David Garen, Betty Garen, and Samuel Garen.

In any language. *Philadelphia, Pa. (EMM)*—Noriko Ikzoe (left), an exchange student from Japan, and Joyce Dich, a sophomore at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., sing during a service at the Abundant Life Chinese Church in south Philadelphia, Pa. The Abundant Life congregation, led by Dorcas and Truong Tu, offers Chinese language and culture classes in an effort to reach out to Chinese young people. The classes are especially attractive to Chinese parents who want their children to retain Chinese culture. Many Chinese young people in south Philadelphia who go to church are rejected by their Buddhist parents because of their choice.

BIRTHS

Anders, Elizabeth Longacre and David, Telford, Pa., David Clay (second child), March 27.

Bergey, Charlene Delp and Marlin, Souderton, Pa., Neil Marlin (third child), Feb. 15.

Bousfield, Angela Zielman and Mark, St. Thomas, Ont., Dirk Mark (first child), March 15.

Currence, Ruth Ann, Millersburg, Ohio, Kayla Marie (first child), Jan. 14.

Gingerich, Debra Metzger and Darrel, Zurich, Ont., Allison Brooke (second child), March 25.

Graber, Rolonda Hooley and Ted, Goshen, Ind., (twins) Kelsey Marie and Alexis Raeann (first and second children), Feb. 27.

Longacre, Dana Vallauri and Bob, Quakertown, Pa., Micah Robert (first child), April 1.

Miller, Raquel Herman and William, Columbus, Ohio, William Grayson (first child), Feb. 9.

Mishler, Diana Mooney and Marc, Kokomo, Ind., Joseph Anthony (second child), April 1.

Nafziger, Carol Grace Hurst and Jon, Crozet, Va., Michael Robin Hurst (second child), Feb. 11.

Raber, An Meyer and Eric, Beach City, Ohio, Micah Timothy Meyer (third child), Jan. 24.

Ressler, Josephine Angelo and Ron, North Canton, Ohio, Jacob Daniel (fourth child), Feb. 17.

Schloneger, Lisa Wolfe and Kevin, Millersburg, Ohio, Nolan Scott (second child), March 27.

Slutz, Linda Steiner and David, Kidron, Ohio, Jared Blair (fourth child), March 13.

Steckle, Kathy Love and Cameron, Zurich, Ont., Valerie Nichole (third child), March 19.

Steiner, Dawn Birky and Mitchell, Orrville, Ohio, Colton Jay (second child), Feb. 14.

MARRIAGES

Brown-Derr: Leslie O. Brown, Turbotville, Pa. (Derry), and Kimberly D. Derr, Watsontown, Pa. (Derry), March 30, by H. Howard Witmer.

Clemens-Smucker: Judy Clemens, Telford, Pa., and Steve Smucker, Telford, Pa., March 30, by Philip Clemens.

Miller-Moyer: Mindy Miller, Hilltown, Pa. (Souderton), and Drew Moyer, Telford, Pa. (Souderton), March 30, by Gerald A. Clemmer.

Moyer-Weidemoyer: Stephanie Moyer, Harleysville, Pa. (Franconia), and William Weidemoyer, Telford, Pa. (Franconia), March 30, by John Ehst.

DEATHS

Clemens, Earl A., 89, Harleysville, Pa. Born: June 6, 1906, Hatfield, Pa., to Sylvanus C. and Esther Allebach Clemens. Died: March 25, 1996, Harleysville, Pa. Survivors—children: Ruth R. Bergey, Esther C. Ongoa, Mary C. Alderfer, Beulah C. Glick, Paul R., David R.; 19 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Katie Ruth Clemens (wife). Funeral: March 29, Peter Becker Community Chapel, by David R. Clemens, Earl Yoder, and Jim Beachy. Burial: March 30, Methacton Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Hofstetter, Lores Ray, 85, Kidron Ohio. Born: April 15, 1910, Kidron, Ohio, to David J. and Lavina Gerber Hofstetter. Died: March 27, 1996, Kidron, Ohio. Survivors—children: Harley, Ella Mae Wilkins, Gerald; brothers: Sylvan, Clair, Willis; 10 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Bernice Nussbaum Hofstetter, (third wife), Esther Hershberger Hofstetter (second wife), and Laura Nussbaum Hofstetter (first wife). Funeral and burial: March 30, Kidron Mennonite Church, by Bruce Friesen and Irvin Nussbaum.

Kachulis, Elsie Fillion, 84, Cedar Falls, Iowa. Born: Aug. 26, 1911, Bad Axe, Mich., to William and Elizabeth Martin Fillion. Died: March 27, 1996, Cedar Falls, Iowa. Survivors—children: Karen Flann, Chuck, Jane, Sara Shirley; 5 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Harold Kachulis (husband). Funeral: March 30, Cedar Falls Mennonite Church, by Terry Rediger. Burial: Lakeland, Fla.

Keim, Alvin J., 92, Goshen, Ind. Born: April 7, 1903, Miami County, Ind., to Joseph and Sarah Heinbuch Keim. Died: March 26, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Mary Miller Keim; children: Esther Kendall, Josephine Fox, Walter; brother and sister: George, Mary Rupp; 8 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: George and Joseph Keim (sons). Funeral: March 30, Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, by T. Lee Miller and Floyd Sneary. Burial: Christner Cemetery.

Miller, Verba Mae, 95, Hesston, Kan. Born: Sept. 10, 1900, Jet, Okla., to James J. and Emma Brobst Miller. Died: March 24, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—brother and sisters: Freeman Miller, Ola Hooley, Lela Naffziger. Funeral: March 27, Showalter Villa Chapel, by Mary Dyck. Burial: Crystal Springs Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Miller, Vernon E., 83, Middlebury, Ind. Born: April 6, 1912, LaGrange County, Ind., to John D. and Malinda Mehl Miller. Died: March 5, 1996, Middlebury, Ind. Survivors—wife: Leota C. Pletcher Miller; children: Patricia Eicher, Margaret Wanberg, Diane Stealy; brother: Harold; 8 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jeanette (daughter). Funeral: March 7, First Mennonite Church, by Joe Slabach and John F. Murray. Burial: Grace Lawn Cemetery.

Oswald, Susie Marie Springer, 91, Shickley, Neb. Born: Oct. 1, 1904, Stuttgart, Ark., to John and Elizabeth Kuntze Springer. Died: March 27, 1996, Lincoln, Neb. Survivors—husband: Alvin Oswald; children: James, Gerald, Elaine Good; 11 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lila (daughter). Funeral and burial: April 1, Salem Mennonite Church, by Wilton Detweiler.

Wood, James Lyman, 37, Crittenden, Va. Born: Aug. 28, 1958, Suffolk, Va., to Frank and Mary Nelms Wood. Died: March 21, 1996, Suffolk, Va., of complications from diabetes. Survivors—son: James Andrew; brother: Frank Edward III. Congregational membership: Huntington Mennonite Church. Funeral: March 24, Meadowbrook Mausoleum Chapel, by Gerald Showalter and Tim Piland. Burial: Meadowbrook Memorial Gardens.

MCC workers begin assignments. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Twenty-five workers participated in orientation at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters in Akron, Pa., March 19-29. Ten of those are affiliated with the Mennonite Church. They are:

Front row (left to right): Paula Martin, packing supervisor in Ephrata, Pa.; Rebekah Ray (with Rosalyn Ray Roberts), library assistant in Kuruman, South Africa; Larry Guengerich, media coordinator in Akron, Pa.; Darrel Mast (with Elizabeth), development education broadcaster/trainer, and Esther Mast (with Nathan), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Second row: Harold Otto, program coordinator in Belgrade, Serbia; Aaron Ray-Crichton with parents to South Africa; Terry Roberts, development assistant, Kuruman, South Africa; Kenneth Sensenig, assistant director of MCC East Coast in Akron, Pa.; Samuel Stoltzfus, receiving and repairs in Akron, Pa.

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THE LAST WORD

Peace, peace, when there may be no peace

It's good there is a military. At the very least, it gives us Mennonites an example of how we put Jesus' teaching to love our enemies into practice. We don't participate in the military. We don't approve of what it does.

Yet while we have been defining ourselves by what we don't do, we may have neglected what we do: violence in our relationships with each other, especially when we disagree.

These days we live in a world remolding itself around tribal groups. Ethnicity, we call it. Small groups find their niche of truth and cling to it tenaciously, too often at war with those who disagree—in Bosnia, in the Middle East, on the streets of America.

The same attitudes are creeping into the church. Among the things I've seen in the past months are these:

- A 30-year-old man gets ridiculed for his hairstyle—shaved at the sides, a ponytail at the back.
- A woman gives a solution to a problem at a meeting, but she is ignored. Ten minutes later, a man picks up the idea, finesses it, and get lauded for his "brilliant leadership."
- A 55-year-old man gets called "naive" for not having thought through all the implications of a new idea he is proposing.
- A 58-year-old leader is told twice she is out of order in trying to bring a proposal to a meeting. Then, when she chooses to remain silent, she is criticized for not speaking up.

These are not events out of one-on-one conversations. They are all things I've observed in public meetings, Mennonite meetings, some of which had hundreds of people attending.

As troubling as the incidents are the reactions of us who look on. Sometimes we laugh when the put-down comes as a joke. Sometimes we sit in embarrassed silence. Never once has anyone stood up to say, "Stop! You're hurting someone. You're violating people."

Which we are. Next time watch what happens to the "victims." A few break into tears. Most manage an embarrassed grin as they go back to their seats with stooped shoulders. There they sit, oblivious to what continues, trying to rearrange their feelings to be whole people again.

Why do we let this go on? Probably because we're mostly unaware of it. In those rare cases when I've dared to point out what I thought I saw happening, the response has most often been: "You're right; I hadn't thought about it before." Yet people much more observant than I am tell me this kind of violence, this tramping over people goes on among us all the time.

It becomes particularly prominent when we feel strongly about something—setting a boundary, determining what is truth, deciding how we should live. Whether out of strongly held convictions or the insecurities of our own positions, we forget about others and their feelings as we defend ourselves and ours.

"The overall message of the Bible makes it clear that violence against other human beings in the name of service to God is a sign of idolatry, not of faithfulness," writes Ted Grimsrud in this issue (page 1). Strong words, those.

But they are not nearly as strong as those Jesus had for people who did violence to others in the name of truth and tradition: hypocrites, blind guides, whitewashed tombs, he called them. Justice, mercy, faith—"it is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others," Jesus said (Matt. 23:23). In other words, convictions, boundaries, and rules are necessary, but they are un-Christian unless established by faith, with mercy, including justice.

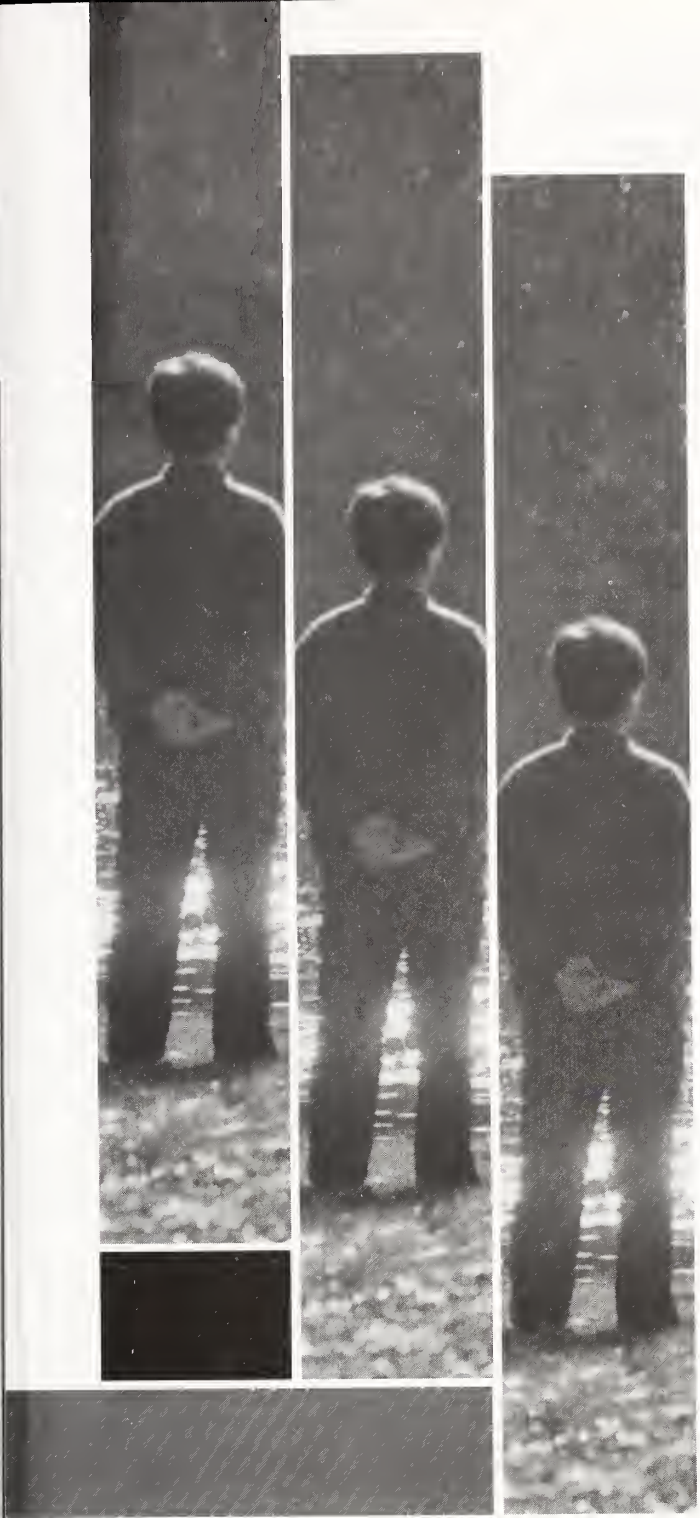
"We need to hold convictions strongly, but we need not hold them arrogantly," Bill Detweiler, Kidron, Ohio, told an Illinois Mennonite Conference gathering last month. Detweiler described the children of God's kingdom as gentle and humble. "Humility is the hallmark of our authenticity," he said.

Those words are worth pondering in this day of setting boundaries and reestablishing rules. If our genuineness is shown in our attitude toward others, particularly toward those who disagree, repentance and conversion need to take place among us.

God's call is to gentleness and humility. It is to be willing to listen to others and take their ideas as seriously as our own. It is to stop doing violence to each other by attitude and word, if not action, when we disagree.

When this happens, we will no longer need the military to help us define how we are a people of peace.—*jlp*

April 30, 1996



Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

APR 29 '96

How my God met me (6):

On three Monday nights in autumn

It is not always easy to hear God speaking. But on these three nights, I was given clear messages and clear understanding. And for them I am most grateful.

by Ed Robbins

One: It is a fairly typical autumn evening here in northern New York: the fallen leaves swirl among the flow of traffic, the air is brisk and chilly, and coats and gloves have begun to make their appearance. In anticipation of winter, I am on my way into the nondescript brick building where I will join in my weekly meeting of a therapy group for adult children of alcoholics (ACOA).

I have joined this therapy group in order to continue processing ACOA issues in my life, as I have done for the last few years. I am not sure I want to open my private pains to a group of strangers, but here I am—with the group's counselor and two women and seven men—exploring the inner world of ACOAs. I am the only one in the group who is not also a recovering alcoholic; and besides the counselor, I am the only Christian.

Tonight the group is focusing on specifics of their home situations as they were growing up and what dynamics were at work in their families. We mutter to ourselves and shift restlessly in our chairs, knowing there will be

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Donna Mast:
Learning new ways to walk through grief with friends 6

Peacemakers in South Africa work to defuse election violence 9

General Board comes face-to-face with realities of integration 10

Knowing for certain that my God has met me in the past serves as a constant reminder that the promise is still true: 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'

no evasion possible, that we will all have to answer some very painful questions and face things we would rather leave undisturbed. We go around the circle, and the tales begin to pour forth. One speaks of a father who drank himself into a stupor nightly to avoid the pain of a troubled home life. Another speaks of a mother who would enlist the aid of her children in helping to hide her disease, even cajoling the children into hiding her stashes of bottles and doing the meals and housework to cover for a mother too drunk and sick to perform even the most basic tasks.

As we go around the circle, one theme repeats itself again and again—a sad dark refrain that speaks of abuse in many forms. Some of us experienced emotional or mental abuse: the head games, the rule a child never knew existed until it was broken, the silence to be maintained, the guilt feelings brought to bear. And so many in this room experienced the horrors of physical abuse. One speaks of being one of thirteen children and how they all would scatter when Father came home, striving to be the ones who got out of reach and terrified of being the unlucky one who was caught and savagely beaten.

Worst of all, they knew that the same thing would happen again the next night, and the next, on into an unbearable future. Another speaks of the agonies inflicted by a grandfather and feeling only a profound relief when at last he died and not a single feeling of hurt or loss. And the stories go on and on.

As I listen, I think to myself, "God, how much pain and agony must people endure? How can these people function at all? Is it any wonder that the idea of you as their Father is not attractive when fathers inflict pain?"

Author Ed Robbins with his granddaughter Michelle.

To listen to these stories wearies the soul; the bleakness that has grown from these seeds of horror sown in childhood is almost too much to bear. It is not surprising that these people became alcoholics themselves; it is the only coping mechanism they have ever known to help make the inner torment go away.

And out of this, I hear the Spirit clearly say, "Now you begin to understand what I have saved you from." And in that moment it all flashes back in my mind: the Sunday school teacher who took a neighborhood kid under his wing, the families who showed a confused boy what a home and family was really supposed to be like, the pastor who modeled what a godly man was. I am reminded anew of the words of Psalm 139:16—"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." God, knowing the terrors found in an alcoholic home, had a plan to save me from its worst and to show what a home and a family can really become. And again I am reminded of the all-embracing love of my Father, who has taken this moment to remind me that he always knows what I need.

Two: This night the meeting seems endless. The counselor is locked into a desperate conversation, trying to reach one of the group who is deeply angry with the courts for requiring him to be here. Several others in the group have joined in, working to break through the wall of hostility and defensiveness, to reach out to the angry one and to lance the boil of rage and despair. As I watch and listen, I see his desperate attempts to evade them, to deny the pain he so clearly feels, to fend off their help so that he may remain in control.

He reminds me of the Gadarene demoniac: he hates the demons that torment him, the chains that shackle him, the desperate loneliness of life among the tombs, but he can imagine nothing else. "This is my life," he proclaims, "Let me live it the best I can. Stay away from me—you can't help me."

And just as this thought passes through my mind, I hear a familiar whisper in my spirit: "Now you know what I have saved you to. There are so many in this world who cling desperately to their pain because it is all they know. They cannot imagine being healed because no one has ever told them that there is a Healer. That is why I have called you: to serve others, so that they may come to me and be given the rest and healing they need."

And as it has so many times before, this renewed sense of call to serve both chills and thrills me, because it is both a great privilege and a great responsibility. The Gadarene de-

moniac was delivered by the Lord Jesus. To speak to people for Jesus and point them to him today is awesome indeed. To be affirmed in this call is almost overwhelming for me—a true gift from my heavenly Father.

Three: For some strange reason, the talk around the circle this night has turned to matters of faith and religion. All of us observe a standard practice during our meetings: first names only, each one reveals as much or as little about their personal lives as they choose, no discussion of God by name. Here God is referred to as one's Higher Power. Everyone has talked to some degree about their homes and work, but I have never been asked about my employment. To my amazement, and the counselor's, no one has ever asked me, "What do you do?" I have chosen not to mention it for fear of the deadening effect that the knowledge that a minister is present so often has. Besides, I am there for me and not as a pastor.

The counselor has several times in the past made it clear that she is a believer, while also acknowledging that as an employee of a publicly funded institution she is barred from clearly speaking about all the possible help for human needs she was aware of. But tonight she is leaning way over to one side of the fine line she must tread, for the group begins to bombard her with questions about why Christians believe what they do, why they act the way they do around people with substance abuse problems, and what makes the Bible different from other books. The questions fly thick and fast, and from time to time I come to her help, answering questions I know she isn't supposed to in the context of her work, trying to explain how and why God loves humankind, sent Jesus for their sins, and other questions.

At last, one of the group speaks up and says, "I remember hearing all this stuff when I was a kid, but what good does it do me now? Where are the preachers when I need them? All they ever do is stay inside their churches and ask for money. What do they know about trying to stay sober and hold down a job and provide for a family? What have preachers ever done for me?"

At that the counselor turns her head and looks at me quickly, a question on her face. I nod my head, and she turns to the questioner: "Why don't you ask Ed?"

Before the surprise can fall from the faces around the group, I turn to the questioner and tell him that I am a pastor, and although I never became an alcoholic myself, I still know very well the struggles one faces in coming to grips with the pains of an alcohol-scarred past. I say that I have a family that strives to live within their means, just like his. I remind him that I have nothing in myself to offer to ease his inner grief, but that I know Someone who can heal stuff no psychologist can ever touch. And I tell him that he can come to my church any time he wants, and no one will ever ask him for a dime.

This conversation serves as a sort of climax for this part of the session, and we move on to the issues on the agenda for the night. After the meeting, the defiant man comes up to me privately. "I knew there was something different about you, but I still find it hard to imagine. A preacher who has problems like me! Can I call you on the phone and talk to you sometime about stuff?"

Smiling a little on the inside at his surprise, I give him my phone number and an invitation to come to our Christmas church service with his family. Then we go our separate ways.

As I get into my car, I replay the events of tonight's meeting in my mind. And as I remember, there arises in my heart and spirit a message: "Now you know what I have saved you for."

And I realize anew the strength of the connection I have always felt with Isaiah 6. There, in the midst of grief for the loss of the king, Isaiah found his true calling. Purified of his sin and made aware of the divine need, the prophet cries out, "Here I am! Send me!"

Often I have felt the same things within my soul. Aware of my own sin and redemption, knowing that God wants someone to go into the fields that are ripe for harvesting, like Isaiah I have responded to God's call. And tonight I have been privileged to hear words of affirmation and a call to greater understanding.

It is not always so easy to hear God speaking to me. Like everyone else, there are times when I struggle to know the mind of God, to sense God's leading and direction. But on these three nights I have been given clear messages and clear understanding, and for them I am more grateful than I can say. For they are times when God has really been Immanuel, "God with me."

Ed Robbins is pastor of the Watertown (N.Y.) Mennonite Church. He and his wife, Debbie, have a son, Matthew, and two daughters, Deanna and Kayla.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake."—Psalm 23:1-3, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Integration Committee Recommends Name for New Merged Mennonite Denomination (Apr. 2). As we select a name for the new denomination, could we try to avoid the arrogance of deciding on a name which has the appearance of designating ourselves as the normative member of the Anabaptist-Mennonite family by which all others will need to measure themselves?

"Mennonite Church North America" has precisely this ring of self-righteous arrogance. At the very least, could we tone it down a bit by calling ourselves something like "Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in North America" or "Association of Mennonite Churches in North America"?

Robert L. Ramseyer
Elkhart, Ind.

It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer (Mar. 12). Why wait? if your family's future was being destroyed, would you advocate waiting? Or would you do all you could to save them because you loved them?

Our beloved church family may be destroyed while we wait.

Dean Swartzendruber
Kalona, Iowa

In his letter (Mar. 26), Royce Buller seems to suggest that if Mennonites would accept the state's right to use coercive force, we could join the political process in good conscience.

But for me there is a prior consideration. The political process is, for the most part, an effort to gain power. Political parties go to any length to gain popular support. Truth is irrelevant. Opponents are vilified. Dirty tricks are elevated to an art form.

Power becomes everything. This is the power of domination, of gaining selfish ends with little if any regard to the ultimate impact on people, the environment, or other peoples in the world. What becomes sacred is "the national interest" as defined by whoever happens to do the defining.

Political power pits people against people, interest against interest. Buller illustrates this when he claims that the "intelligentsia of the Mennonite church align themselves with the more socially liberal political party."

That is precisely the ploy of a political party: to label people so as to turn them into one's enemies—or persons who are to be scorned and dominated.

Buller's final challenge is that we consider the philosophies of the candidates, apparently to find the one that comes closest to our beliefs. Good luck. Amid all the propaganda designed to convince people that they will benefit from a party's domination, finding the truth will indeed be a challenge, and any relationship to what is actually done will be purely coincidental.

All this in contrast to the kingdom of God, where power is of the Spirit, salvation is by way of sacrifice, life is by death, greatness is by serving, and truth is spoken in love.

Personally, my commitment to the kingdom precludes me from trying to invest much besides prayer in a domination system whose tacks and strategies are for the benefit of those in power. In this system, the way of the cross is virtually unknown.

Wayne North
Harrisonburg, Va.

While we were not given an opportunity to sign the letter from the 75 other Mennonite pastors (Apr. 9), we, the pastoral staff of Cape Christian Fellowship were also present at the "Fan the Flame" clergy conference sponsored by Promise Keepers.

We could not have expressed ourselves any better than what was said in this letter. We wholeheartedly agree and would add our "amens." The lives of men in our church and our community are being changed to be more like Jesus Christ as a result of participation in local and national events sponsored by Promise Keepers.

Phil Farrell
Dennis Gingerich
Tony Hostetler
Russ Winstead
Cape Coral, Fla.

As an old program type, I must confess some concern about the anti-program emphasis in the letter from the 75 pastors (Apr. 9). As I understand it, these men "experienced God's presence" in what was surely a program. And I'm confident that they will not close down their *programs* of leading worship and preaching in their home congregations.

Evidently what troubles them are the churchwide and possibly the district conference programs. If these

are failing to communicate the things of God (although some of us thought the Spirit was present last year at Wichita), it is important for planners to listen to these concerns and revised their programs as needed. They might also invite some of these 75 pastors to serve on conference and churchwide boards in order that their insights can benefit all of us.

One thing is sure: the forces working against us will not cease their programming. The results of their work appear on TV continuously.

Daniel Hertzler
Scottdale, Pa.

Thank you for the letter from the 75 Mennonite ministers who participated in Promise Keepers' "Fan the Flame" clergy conference in Atlanta, Ga. Add my name to the list of those who participated and personally experienced "brokenness, repentance, confession, reconciliation, and celebration."

As editor of the *Brotherhood Beacon*, the Conservative Mennonite Conference's paper, I asked some of the ministers of our conference who were in Atlanta, to write a short summary of their experience. Here's a sampling of what they said:

"May I be more sensitive to my family and have greater communication. I thank God for a great week in Atlanta, Georgia!"

"I went to Georgia as a broken man. God . . . crushed [me] even more. Then he reassembled me and gave me a new vision, a new hope, a new marriage relationship, and a new ministry!"

"God will bring revival among us and is using the Promise Keepers movement to 'Fan into Flame' that work of the Holy Spirit."

"I left the conference with a profoundly deeper appreciation for the ways of God and for the privilege of experiencing church with thousands of brothers who, though diverse in many ways, had one thing in common—our Lord Jesus Christ."

For me, I can best explain it by the fact that, a week later, my wife gave me a very special hug and said, "If this is what happens to you at Promise Keepers, you may go every time you have a chance!" That, itself, made it all worthwhile!

Elmer H. Maust
Accident, Md.

For the past week or so I've been trying to decide what to make of the statement (Apr. 9) signed by 75 Mennonite ministers who attended the Promise Keepers' clergy conference.

It is certainly one of contrast. It speaks in glowing, positive terms about the conference and the Promise Keepers' movement. But when it turns to the church, it uses largely negative terms.

Can any good come out of such an attack on the church? It worked for me. I found myself coming to the defense of the church. It gave me a renewed respect for and appreciation of the church that I've been a member of for more than 50 years.

Thank God for the Mennonite Church! Thank God for College Mennonite Church!

Richard Hostetler
Goshen, Ind.

In reference to the debates raging within the church over who should be allowed to become members—including gays and military personnel—it occurs to us that we Christians spend *way* too much time arguing over who to exclude and not enough time discussing how to invite as many as possible to the Lord's kingdom, letting God sort out the goats from the sheep.

Really, if we are going to start excluding on the basis of deliberate sin, shouldn't we then deny membership to alcoholics, smokers, overweight people, gossipers, liars and exaggerators, lusters, people who don't tithe 10 percent, and tobacco growers—to name a few. Maybe we should exclude Democrats and/or Republicans? Men without beards? Women without head coverings?

To be sure, God has called us to be forthright about sin. But since when have any of us been named "keepers of the book of life," commissioned to decide whose name to write into it and those to be left off?

We think Max Lucado said it quite well in his book, *When God Whispers Your Name*: "Seems to me God gives us a lot more grace than we'd ever imagine. . . . When we get to heaven, we'll be surprised at some of the folks we see. And some of them will be surprised when they see us."

Dale Daugherty
Barbara Pankratz-Daugherty
Colorado Springs, Colo.

After reading Samuel B. Nafziger's letter in the April 2 issue of *Gospel Herald,* I took my concordance and looked up the Scripture passages that use the words "help" and "helper."

The meaning of these words comes out quite clearly when one sees the context in which these words are used. It appears that they are used in situations in which the strong one comes to the aid of the weak one. Writers describe God as a "very present help in trouble," and say that, "my help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth."

Has the meaning of the words changed?

Elsie McDowell
Stouffville, Ont.

A recent editorial (Apr. 9) stated that God was exhausted after the six days of creation, so he rested. Isn't that making God a little bit too much in the image of humanity? Isn't God trying to show us here that we should quit after six days, even though we think that we are as God and don't need to rest? The image of an exhausted Creator seems inappropriate and unbiblical.

Stephen Gibbs
Cusco, Peru

Pontius' Puddle

Learning better ways to walk

Time is relative. It moves on for those who do not need to grieve. But for those who must face a death or a tragedy, time is not of the essence. Grieving is.

by Donna Mast

Tom and Linda had been close friends of my husband and me for five years. During this time they disclosed much of themselves to us, and we knew of their decision before they were married to remain childless. Tom had grown up in a dysfunctional home and didn't want to perpetuate that dysfunction, and Linda tends to have a low energy level. We knew of this background as we watched them become increasingly involved with the children of our church. And we saw their rapport with, not only our children, but also with the many children in our congregation.

They told us of their struggles as a couple when Linda began to desire those children she'd promised never to have. We counseled with them informally as they rethought this decision over the course of about two years. One spring day in 1993, they told us that they were expecting a baby in mid-November. The joy on their faces was a wonderful sight.

In mid-July their joy was shattered when Linda began premature labor. She was rushed to the hospital where labor was halted for ten days. Throughout this time we stayed in contact via phone calls. They didn't want us to make the 90-mile drive to the hospital until they really needed us.

The phone rang again about five o'clock one evening. They needed us immediately. We hurried into the hospital, along with another couple from our small group. Tom and Linda were asking us to hold a baby dedication service for them while they still had a living baby. They urged our pastor not to change his plans to attend a conference in another state, so we were acting in the pastor's place. Between contractions, we laid our hands on Linda's abdomen and dedicated their baby to God. After this brief service they asked us to go home, and we did.

Their son was born two hours later. They had previously decided not to take any heroic measures since the child would not be fully developed. They were able to hold their baby before he died a half hour later.

The funeral was a simple service. They wouldn't accept a funeral meal from the hospitality committee at church. When I learned this, I asked if they would allow another woman and me to have a meal waiting for them in their home following the funeral. This they would accept.

As we walked through the next year with this couple, I saw that death and the funeral are only the beginnings of grief. I came to believe that our congregation could be more helpful in future situations if we took the time to educate ourselves about the needs of grieving people. Loss is universal, and we all must face it many times in our lives. A church ought to know how to help people in facing their losses.

Losses need to be grieved; running from grief results in living only a partial life. When one lives through the grief, the end result is a fuller, richer life.

Understanding the universality of grief and the necessity of grieving only intensifies my belief that churches need to spend some time in grief education. We are told to "mourn with those who mourn" (Rom. 12:15). The church has a mandate to offer comfort (2 Cor. 1).

As I interacted with Tom and Linda I found myself acting largely on instinct. The losses I have experienced were not major ones. I know that some in our congregation were better able to minister from within their own experience. A few, perhaps, had some formal training in how to minister to the grieving. Many I suspect were, like myself, going largely on instinct.

The week and a half that Tom and Linda waited in the hospital must have been a draining experience. They were held in limbo, not knowing if their child would have a chance at life or not. I wish now that we had gone against their wishes and visited them during that week. Linda was directing all of her energies toward the baby, but perhaps we could have been of some comfort to Tom.

At the baby dedication there were no "whys" asked. We simply thanked God for the life of their baby and gave the child, as well as the outcome, to God. I believe this act was comforting.

Tom and Linda didn't want us to make an unnecessary trip to the hospital, and we left immediately after the dedication at their request. They asked the pastor to attend his

conference anyway, and later they didn't want the hospitality committee to make a meal. They didn't want to be a bother or mess up others' plans; I realize now that was their style. Perhaps we should have pushed them harder on these points. Their needs were valid, and they deserved to have people go out of their way to meet some of those needs.

The funeral that Tom and Linda planned was a very simple affair. Linda's father, who is also a pastor, helped them in their planning. Our pastor was still at the conference. Only family members plus two people from our small group who weren't at the baby dedication attended the funeral. I could watch the family interact with one another because I helped serve the funeral meal. There were lots of hugs and quiet talk. The hugs exchanged by family members were supportive and loving responses to deep hurts.

At the funeral meal, I listened as Tom looked for meaning in his grief. Our church was going through some rough times, and he asked me at the meal whether the loss of their baby could somehow help to bring healing to our congregation. A part of grieving is to find purpose in living. Perhaps Tom was emotionally ready to do some grief work because he had accepted the inevitable death of their baby early on in those ten days of waiting at the hospital.

I can't know all of what was said to Tom and Linda. I'm sure that people wanted to be understanding and helpful, but Linda was unable to face church attendance for many months partly for fear of what people would say. Some people tended to downplay their loss. This was done in an attempt to heal, but it was based on a mistaken idea that if we don't discuss the grief, it will go away. It isn't pleasant to face another's pain; however, in naming our losses there is the beginning of acceptance.

Within two weeks of her baby's death, Linda began receiving advice to have another child. The simple platitudes offered to her were attempts at healing, but they denied the need to grieve. The desire to say something that will take away the pain is very common, but grief work demands that the pain and emotions be faced. To deny this is to slow the grief process.

Linda feared the response of others, but fear of her own responses also kept her away from church on Sunday mornings. She never knew when she might break down and cry or when she would be angry. I know now that emotional instability is a normal part of grief. If Linda could have known acceptance no matter what her emotional state was on Sunday mornings, perhaps she could have participated in worship services earlier. Unfortunately, the church is too often a place for pasted-on smiles and too rarely a place for raw emotion.

People were quite understanding of Tom and Linda at first. But several months after the death of their son, people began to ask me how I thought the two were "coming along." There was concern that Linda wasn't getting back to her old self as quickly as she ought. The church was coming to the end of its tolerance. Time is relative—it was moving on for those who did not need to grieve, but for Linda in particular, time was not of the essence now. Her grieving was.

My response to these well-meaning people was that Linda was doing fine and she needed to grieve. If I had done my research, I would have been able to make this statement with more confidence. People wanted Linda to smile and interact as she always had. When we see tears, we often think the person is not doing well. This is a myth.

Not all of my "acting on instinct" was helpful to Tom and Linda. I believe that I did shield them from some well-intentioned but harmful comments. However, there were times that I avoided contact with Linda in particular because I simply didn't know what to say. Tom would sometimes ask me to call Linda during the week, but the end of the week would come and I'd been "too busy" to have called. I also

If I had to do it over, I would ask direct questions. I would listen, not shying away from the pain. And I would recognize that grief has its own timetable.

wondered about the brooch she wore constantly that contained her son's picture. I saw this practice as morbid and failed to realize that wearing this memento was part of her grief work.

Fortunately, I was not the only one offering friendship and care. There were many who were trying to be the sympathetic people that Tom and Linda needed. One woman in particular was adept at sensing needs. She had miscarried several times herself before she and her husband finally became parents, so she understood on a level that I couldn't. She planted a flowering plant in Tom and Linda's yard that would bloom every year in July, the anniversary of the baby's death.

At times, Tom concerned me more than Linda. I could see that Linda was grieving, but it seemed that Tom was so concerned and protective of her that he was unable to put any energies into himself. I later learned that this protection is common.

I spoke with Tom on several occasions, urging him to take care of himself and to allow himself to grieve. His reply was always, "What else can I do? Linda needs me." I think now that Tom had done a good portion of his grieving in the hospital while Linda was still fighting for her child's life. Also, he didn't need to grieve in the same way as Linda did. Grief is a very personal thing.

Our small group began meeting again in September. We found we had to seriously adapt our usual study if Linda was to be a part of us. She seemed to not want to spend much time in the study of Scripture because it made her cry. I think she was dealing with a lot of false guilt at this point. Her baby had been healthy. It was her body that failed her baby and caused his death. I wish we could have helped her to face these emotions honestly.

As a small group, we didn't have the tools to help her with her feelings. We didn't encourage her to be open about those feelings. She probably sensed our impatience to get on with our study, so much of her energy was directed at appearing "normal."

In October, I tentatively asked Linda and Tom if they would consider babysitting for us once a week when my husband and I went to choir practice. This turned out to be a good thing. Linda had developed a fear of being alone, especially at night. Tom is a farmer. During harvest he must work late hours frequently, leaving Linda alone. Having our children with Linda filled the house with busy, happy bodies. Linda was needed by little persons once again. The children expressed their love for Linda openly, freely, and often. Tom was included in this once harvest was over. Tom and Linda were free to love back as well. I believe these Mondays were healing times.

By summer we were seeing signs of healing in Linda. She began to show renewed energy and a willingness to accept some jobs at church again. In Linda's healing there was relief for Tom. I now realize that the healing process was really quite rapid for this couple.

If I had it to do over, I would ask direct questions and allow the couple to speak freely of their loss. I would listen, not shying away from the pain. I would recognize the fact that grief has its own timetable, requiring patience from me and from others. I would avoid attempts to take the pain away.

I can't go back and do it over, but I can incorporate what I've learned into my reactions for next time. I can push for grief education to take place within the church community. We need to learn to deal with grief because we all experience losses.

Donna Mast and her husband, Conrad, live in Harrisonburg, Va. They are both students at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Along with their three daughters, they attend Community Mennonite Church. All names in this article have been changed to respect the privacy of the individuals involved.

Help for understanding grief

The following books provide help in understanding and dealing with grief, both one's own grief and that experienced by friends.

- *Miscarriage, a Quiet Grief* by Nelson and Ellen Kraybill (Herald Press, 1990).
- *Afterloss: a Recovery Companion for Those Who Are Grieving* by Barbara Hills LesStrang (Thomas Nelson, 1992).
- *Pastoral Care and Counseling in Grief and Separation* by Wayne E. Oates (Fortress, 1976).
- *Pastoral Care Emergencies: Ministering to People in Crisis* by David K. Switzer (Integration Books, 1989).
- *Recovering from the Losses of Life* by H. Norman Wright (Revel, 1993).

Pulling peace into the rings:
Mennonites prepare for presence at Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta

Atlanta, Ga.—Plans are nearing completion for a Mennonite witness during the Atlanta Summer Games (July 19-Aug. 4). Centerpiece of that effort is the Peace Factory, to be hosted at a site in the heart of the Olympic Ring. More than one million guests from every corner of the globe are expected in the city during the Games.

"It's a chance for us to be Christ's presence at a worldwide event, proclaiming the gospel of peace," says Vernon Schertz, local coordinator of the effort. "We want to make a few more people aware that there are other ways to solve conflict in our world."

Efforts of a coalition, including Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship and the Berea Mennonite Church, are now focused on finding financial backing and volunteers with counseling, organizing, and linguistic skills. Young people will volunteer at the exhibit through Mennonite Board of Missions, says Schertz, adding that the committee is still looking for volunteers from Mennonite congregations to be available for conversation with viewers of the exhibit.

The local committee has struck an agreement to place Peace Factory at the Trinity United Methodist Church located between the Georgia Dome, the Olympic Village, and the new Olympic Stadium. Authorities are estimating that 85,000 visitors will pass that location daily, many of them from foreign countries. Schertz says the exhibit will be located on "prime territory" in the midst of a walking area. Costs for the project are currently estimated at $10,700, he says.

The intent is to engage part of this crowd on themes of peace and of biblical faith. Peace Factory is a hands-on exhibit fostering the "arts of peaceable living." Schertz says that members of Methodist, Presbyterian, and Friends churches are joining the effort as well. "We're not just putting on a show," says Schertz. "We hope the message of peace can filter into people's lives."—*Jonathan Larson*

Broad smiles but closed doors. *Harrisonburg, Va. (MCC)*—China Educational Exchange (CEE) teacher Jeanette Hanson holds babies at a Chinese orphanage. In response to Western criticism, the Chinese government has shut its doors to foreigners wishing to work in Chinese orphanages. As a result, CEE will not be able to place a Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored occupational therapist at an orphanage in Sichuan Province, China, as planned. It is now also much more difficult for foreigners living in China to visit orphanages, including several CEE teachers who spent time each week playing and working with handicapped children.

A documentary aired by the British Broadcasting Company first raised Western public awareness of poor conditions at Chinese orphanages. A subsequent Human Rights Watch report accused orphanage officials of intentionally allowing certain children to die. The report gives the impression that allowing children to die is a widespread practice, but releases from the Amity Foundation, a Christian social service agency and CEE's main partner, say these incidents are isolated and the result of insufficient funding.

CEE is an organization of Mennonite agencies and colleges that participate in North America-China educational exchanges.—*Myrrl Byler*

Peacemakers work to defuse election violence

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Political violence continues in parts of South Africa despite the end of apartheid and peaceful transfer of power nationally.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers Evelyn and Karl Bartsch are assisting South African church leaders as they organize an international peace presence of observers in the days leading up to May 29 provincial elections.

The province of KwaZulu Natal, where Bartsches are based, continues to be torn by violence led by factions supporting the ruling African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party, which holds the majority in the province. "The political conflict set the stage for criminal revenge," Bartsches note. They report visible evidence of the violence: burned-out homes and churches, children numbed by the murder of their parents. "Almost everyone we meet has had family members killed or wounded by the informal civil war," they write.

Sixty to 70 murders are reported weekly. In this violent atmosphere, provincial church leaders have initiated an Ecumenical Peacemakers' Program. Twenty international observers have arrived, and 100 local people have been recruited as a peace presence in support of fair and open elections. Observers are provided with uniforms—jackets emblazoned with two doves over a cross that represents the church in action.

Many of these peacemakers monitored the 1994 national election. "Many braved violent crowds, took huge risks, and had a basically fair and peaceful election to show for it," write Bartsches. Their role is to meet with the peacemakers to prepare them for the stresses they may face in the weeks ahead and advise on ways they can help people who experience trauma.

General Board comes face-to-face with tough realities of integration

Gordonville, Pa.—As usual, the Mennonite Church General Board's agenda was packed when it met at the Ridgeview Mennonite Church Apr. 17-20. But it was merger with the General Conference Mennonite Church that dominated the 30 hours of business discussion.

"Integration is a very exciting and challenging opportunity," said the board's interim general secretary, Miriam Book, in introducing a report from an Integration Committee set up to oversee merger of the two groups.

How challenging became apparent during an in-depth review of the work of Mennonite Publication Board (MPB). Discussion centered on how to merge the work of the Mennonite Publishing House—which the Mennonite Church has asked to pay its own way through sales—with GC publishing work—part of which operates with contributed funds.

"We represent an agency that has legal and fiduciary responsibilities," Maurice Martin, MPB chair, told the General Board. "In many ways our creativity [in integration] is hampered by these realities."

J. Robert Ramer, publisher, was more direct. "The church has appointed us to manage a corporation's assets. That's what keeps us awake at nights. You need to be aware of the ramifications of any move to change or take away one of these assets from the whole."

Ramer spoke specifically of discussions to discontinue *Gospel Herald* for a new integrated publication. *Gospel Herald* currently generates close to a half million in cash flow for Mennonite Publishing House.

In response, the General Board agreed that high priority must be given to determining the shape of the publishing structure in a new integrated denomination. The board recommended that discussions on a new publication be put on hold until the shape of this new structure is determined.

Vague models. Other agencies also got the board's attention in relation to integration, though not to the extent of the MPB in-depth review. When Orville Yoder, president of Mennonite Board of Education (MBE), noted that the structural models being proposed for the new church were vague on the relationship of schools, the General Board asked MBE to get together with its GC counterparts and come back with a proposal.

The board cautioned Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) not to make any changes in how it is governed until the shape of a new mission structure is decided. MBM was considering changing its 12-member board to one with a representative from each of the 21 area conferences.

The General Board did go on record as favoring the appointment of a mission task force to draw up a plan for an integrated mission structure.

In other integration-related actions, the General Board:

- Asked the Integration Committee to do more work on the name for a new integrated denomination. Board members voiced discontent with "Mennonite Church North America" for a variety of reasons.
- Affirmed the idea of a binational denomination with Canadian and U.S. entities related to it.
- Recommended having a "summit meeting" with broad representation to discuss polity and its implications for integration.
- Approved bylaw changes for Women's Mission and Service Commission (MC) to make merger more feasible with Women in Mission (GC).
- Agreed that the Integration Committee should use legal counsel and professional consultants in its work.

Off and running. "What a difference a year makes," exclaimed Darrell Fast, GC moderator. "A year ago, you were cautious about endorsing the recommendation to integrate," Fast told the MC General Board. "But now with Wichita behind us, now that the delegates have spoken, you are off and running. From the GC side, it feels like we need to race to catch up."

Fast noted that GCs appreciate the enthusiasm about integration and a readiness to work together evident by the General Board and the MC program boards.

In other business, the General

25 years and ending. *Lancaster, Pa.*—Donella Clemens (right), moderator of the Mennonite Church from 1993-95, receives a gift from Ann Weber Becker (left), new member of the General Board. Eight former moderators of the Mennonite Church were guests of honor at a celebration of 25 years of the existence of the General Board. The festivities were held during the board's spring session with a banquet at Lancaster Mennonite High School. In a program that followed, the moderators reminisced about what happened during their two years as head of the Mennonite Church. The stories ranged from Jim Lapp dropping and breaking a symbolic bowl following his installation in 1985 ("I bought that bowl with my own money!" exclaimed Ross Bender, moderator from 1981-83) to George R. Brunk III reflecting how he had been reconciled with a delegate he had cut off in discussion when he was moderator in 1989-91.

The Mennonite Church General Board began in 1971 with a reorganization of the Mennonite Church. Its purpose was "to promote unity and weed out heresy," according to John Sharp, Historical Committee director, who chaired a question-and-answer session with the moderators. As they celebrated, General Board members were also aware their roles could change or end in the next several years with the integration of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Board set up a new "North America travel assistance fund" to help members of various racial and ethnic groups in North America to attend Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta, India, in 1997. "Otherwise, we give the impression that North American Mennonites are briefcase-carrying white males," said Emma Richards, Lombard, Ill.

Money for this fund is to come from a special appeal to conferences and congregations.

The board also learned that, although contributions were down, it ended 1995 with an $8,800 surplus on a budget of more than $600,000.

"Integration is happening, perhaps more quickly than we had anticipated," commented Glen Zehr. He noted that every report in the General Board's docket for the meeting mentioned integration in some way.

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Bethany students help preserve rain forests

Goshen, Ind.—Buying over eight acres of rain forest may not be a typical high school science project, but it's one that students at Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind., have taken on.

By selling T-shirts promoting the environment, students in Marisa Yoder's and Roy Hartzler's environmental science class raised funds that will protect wetlands adjoining the Pantanal National Park in Brazil.

"It scared me to learn that one-half of the world's rain forests have been destroyed, continue to be depleted at a rate of 67 acres per minute, and may vanish within twenty years," says student Megan Berkey. "It feels good that we can help preserve even a little bit."

Julie Yoder notes that many medicines come from rare tropical plants and that rain forests play an essential role in global weather, even in the United States.

They also learned how consumer choices impact rain forests, how recycling helps the rain forest, and ways they can express their opinions to government leaders and corporations.

Students wore their environmental T-shirts to school on April 22 in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Earth Day.

MBM worker preaches peace in warring Liberia

Mennonite Board of Missions staff writer Tom Price recently traveled to West Africa. He was in Liberia from March 28-April 2, four days before the worst fighting in three years broke out in the capital. This is the first in a series of articles about Mennonites in West Africa.—Editor

Buchanan, Liberia (MBM)—Twenty-five military checkpoints line the 85 miles of road from Monrovia to this coastal city, which has become a city of refugees in the anarchy following the civil war that has besieged this West African nation since 1989.

The Pax Liberia enforced at these checkpoints illustrated a stark contrast with the peace of Jesus, which was the focus of a seminar March 30.

"We have our big machine guns and our weapons to make sure nobody hurts us. It is a peace promoted through fear," said Samuel G. Doe, assistant coordinator of healing and reconciliation for the Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL). "Jesus' peace is sharing. It is a peace that is a way of life."

More than three dozen church leaders from a variety of denominations gathered here for "The Biblical Basis of Peacemaking," led by Stephen Wiebe-Johnson, MBM's Africa director, based in Cotonou, Benin. The afternoon event—conducted in conjunction with CHAL, an MBM partner with more than 100 member churches, hospitals, and clinics—was a prelude to an upcoming 10-day workshop, "The Role of the Church in Healing, Reconciliation, and Peace- Building."

ANABAPTISTS IN WEST AFRICA

About 150,000 people have died in the war, which displaced more than 1 million of Liberia's 2.6 million people. The bloody conflict has ceased, but there is little peace for Liberians, who are ruled by six factions of guerrilla groups. East of Monrovia along the coast, past the rubber-tree plantations and amid the thick rain forest, Buchanan has become one of Liberia's largest cities and holds several refugee camps. "This is a city of displaced people," said Marion Subah, a CHAL program manager.

"What is God saying to us about this war and about the church in Liberia?" Wiebe-Johnson asked. "Many of us have seen so many terrible things that we have to cry."

Samuel G. Doe speaks to Liberian church leaders at a March seminar on the biblical basis for peacemaking.

Wiebe-Johnson led the group in a lament over a 1990 massacre in which 600-700 refugees who sought sanctuary in a church were slaughtered by forces of former Gen. Samuel K. Doe.

The church was silent while warlords sat in its buildings and whenever it failed to speak out against injustice, according to Wiebe-Johnson. "The church not only accepted it, but we said it was fine," he said. "The church has not found its voice. For the church to find its voice, we need to learn to be communities of peace," he added.

Liberian church leaders gave their own assessment of the situation. Several saw a common reason as the source of inaction by Christians: fear.

"The church has been afraid of the government officials," they said. "We, the church leaders, we were afraid. We didn't say what was wrong."

The workshop provided a unique angle on Scripture, said Wiebe-Johnson. "People were struck by the nonviolence of Jesus. They had heard the passages before, but they had never read a nonviolent interpretation of them," he said, noting MBM's unique role in providing leadership for such a workshop. "Many of the churches that exist [in Liberia] are along ethnic lines. We can talk about peace . . . from a very neutral place. We don't have any kind of vested interest. We don't have a church we are trying to protect."—*Tom Price*

Mennonite mission worker witnesses the execution of close friend

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—"I don't think I'll ever see the color yellow again without thinking of that stupid chair," says Mary Bucher, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) local program coordinator for Voluntary Service in Mashulaville, Miss.

On Feb. 16, Bucher and Wanda Kuhns, a former VS participant, traveled to a prison in Atmore, Ala., to witness the execution of Edward Horsley. Horsley was convicted for the 1977 brutal sexual assault and murder of a 16-year-old North Carolina resident. After 19 years on death row, Horsley was electrocuted.

Bucher first wrote to Horsley after reading an article about death-row inmates. "It said that people on death row are the most forgotten of all inmates," she says. The article prompted Bucher to find the name of a death-row inmate to write. Edward Horsley was the name she was given.

"Ed was an avid writer. He would write volumes of stuff," Bucher says. "He didn't waste his time in prison. He finished his high school diploma and got an associate's degree in science during his time on death row. He also did a lot in prison with other men. He helped those who couldn't read learn to read while he helped others quit smoking and have a better attitude toward each other."

Over the years, Bucher and Horsley developed a close friendship. "Ed felt free to speak his mind. He would confront me on faith issues where he thought I was wrong."

During Horsley's time on death row, Bucher learned a lot about the legal system and what she calls a lack of justice in it. "It doesn't matter if you're innocent. All that matters is that all the legal steps have been followed. . . . It doesn't matter if there was discrimination or if you're innocent; they'll execute you anyway," she says.

When the execution became inevitable, Bucher traveled to Atmore to be with Horsley for the final few days of his life. Horsley's family came and everyone was supportive of one another.

"It was like a family reunion. Everyone rallied around him in support," she says. And on the day of the scheduled execution, Bucher found that Horsley was at peace. "His sister came right up into his face and asked him, 'Are you ready to go?' and Ed just looked at her and said quietly, 'Yeah, I'm ready,' " Bucher says. "But I wasn't ready."

One of Horsley's last requests was for Bucher to pray with him. "I have trouble praying out loud when I'm in an emotional state, so Ed just said to me, 'I'll pray,' " she says.

Looking back on the nearly two decades that she knew Horsley, Bucher is grateful. "Anytime you invest yourself in people, there can be pain, but it's worth it," she says.

—*Christy Risser*

Zairian church at work amid national trauma

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS-MWC)—In Zaire, a country one-third the size of the United States, there are 80,000 baptized members of the Mennonite Church, according to Fimbo Ganvunze, president of the Mennonite Church of Zaire.

Ganvunze spoke at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., on March 25. He is one of seven leaders of the church who visited North American recently, hosted by Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM).

"The church finds itself in a country that is in a traumatic time. There is a large crisis in Zaire—political, economic, and social," Ganvunze reported, sharing details about the difficulty for families to get medical care and to send their children to school. Some pastors have had to resign from their positions in order to provide for their families.

Elections are scheduled in Zaire for 1997 as the country moves slowly toward democracy. "In the Mennonite Church, we in Zaire don't enter directly into the affairs of the government. We try to do actions that will bring things to light for the government," Ganvunze said.

Pumbu Gambanda Fimbo, wife of Ganvunze, described prayer meetings in responding to a question about the role of women in the churches. In her congregation, "each week we spend one night in church in prayer. In other churches, the women pray from 4 to 6 a.m. and then go to work."

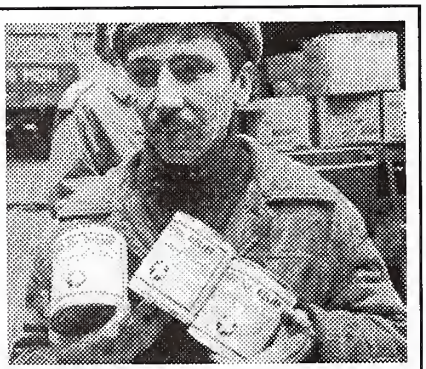
Ganvunze said that evangelism is one priority for the Mennonite Church of Zaire. In areas of recent tribal wars, the Mennonites provide both food and the message of the gospel of peace. "The call came not only for food, but for Mennonites to plant fellowships and bring the message of peace. They have need of our Mennonite ethic," he concluded.

—*Mary E. Klassen*

Together We Can

An 8-minute MCC video

An MCC partner in the former Yugoslavia once said she believed a spiritual blessing had arrived with a shipment of MCC canned meat. "Together We Can" tells the story of the hundreds of volunteers who put up some quarter-million cans of meat yearly on MCC's mobile meat canner, once scoffed at as a "crazy idea." Contact the MCC office nearest you for free loan of this video. Available for purchase from MCC in Akron for $15 Cdn. or $20 U.S.



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- **First class graduates.** The first class graduated from the diploma program of the Meserete Kristos Mennonite Bible Institute in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Apr. 5. The ten students studied English for five three-month blocks of time, interspersed with three months of church work in their home communities.

- **Search continues.** Virginia State police and the FBI are continuing the search for Alicia Showalter Reynolds, Baltimore, Md. The 25-year-old Mennonite doctoral student, 1992 graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, was abducted March 2. More than thirty officers and agents are working on the case and received 2,100 leads in March, according to an article in the *Richmond Times*. Authorities have cleared more than 120 suspects during the past month.

- **Library donated.** Evangelist George R. Brunk II has donated his personal library to Cornerstone Seminary near Harrisonburg, Va. The seminary is a congregational-based training and equipping ministry begun in 1989 by Cornerstone Church and Ministries.

- **Menno House open.** Menno House in New York City is accepting applications for summer and fall residency. The house provides living space for church workers, interns, and students. Contact Mark Birkey at 212 677-1611.

- **This space available.** *Gospel Herald* publishes job openings, coming events, new resources, and other notices in this section free of charge to Mennonite-related institutions. Selected items are printed one time only and are edited to follow a standard format. Announcements for coming events should be sent at least three weeks in advance of the date. Send items to 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683.

Tea for three. *Leola, Pa.*—Amy Martin (left) and Dana Gamber experience a tea of Central Asia with Steve Martin at a missions festival of the Lancaster (Pa.) District of the Atlantic Coast Conference March 30-31. "Celebrating the Global Church" featured a food and culture festival at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa. Over 200 people came to sample food from 18 tables and to view 17 displays from various countries. Numerous mission workers also participated in a panel discussion of issues in mission through storytelling. The weekend concluded with the district's annual Palm Sunday music festival at Akron Mennonite Church.—*Douglas Kaufman*

- **Pastor transitions:**

Maury Brenneman was installed as pastor of Providence Mennonite Church, Montgomery, Ind., on April 28.

Mary Grove terminated as interim pastor at East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church on March 15.

David Helmuth was installed as copastor of East Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church on Feb. 25.

Mary Lehman Yoder was ordained as pastor of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on March 3.

John E. Miller was licensed and installed as minister of youth at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on March 11.

José Eliu Rodriguez ended a pastorate at Iglesia del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind., on Jan. 14.

Floyd Sneary was licensed and installed March 24 as copastor at Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Fred S. Chee began a Voluntary Service term with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) in Washington, D.C. He works as assistant and programming coordinator at Joseph's House.

Tina Groff has begun a one-year Voluntary Service assignment in McAllen, Texas, with MBM. She is a nurse at a pediatric clinic.

Jeff Nimerosky is working for a community home repair program in Tucson, Ariz., with MBM's Voluntary Service program.

- **Coming events:**

19th benefit auction, Kraybill Mennonite School, Mt. Joy, Pa., May 10-11. Activities include a pig roast, craft fair, collectible truck and antique auction, and quilt and art auction. More information from 653-5236.

Youth Leadership and Development conference, Bluffton (Ohio) College, June 20-23. Mike Yaconelli and Lynn Miller are featured speakers. Designed for senior high youth interested in leadership and youth sponsors and ministers. Contact Joyce Schumacher or Randy Keeler at 800 488-3257.

Family camp for home schoolers, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa., July 6-12. Includes educational credit opportunities, outdoor activities and instruction, and worship times. More information from 800 864-7747.

School for Apostles, a church planters' retreat, Lancaster, Pa., July 15-19. Sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions. Resource persons include Yonggi Cho, Karen Hurston, Betty Charles, and Lawrence Chiles. More information from Danielle Kreider at 717 898-2251.

1996 Holy Land Bike Tour through Israel and Jordan, Nov. 1-10. Benefits the Nazareth Christian Hospital. Participants raise $3,800 in tax-deductible donations. Sites include Nazareth, Sea of Galilee, Jordan Valley, Petra, the Dead Sea, Red Sea, and Jerusalem. Contact the Nazareth Project, 717 859-1389.

- **New resources:**

A Comprehensive Bibliography of the Writings of John Howard Yoder, compiled by Mark

Thiessen Nation and arranged topically, will be available in June. Available for $10 if ordered before May 15. Order from 310 670-7325.

• **Job openings:**

Director of campus facilities, Hesston (Kan.) College. Responsibilities include administration of maintenance department, supervision of personnel, budget management, and coordination of projects in campus master plan. Qualifications include experience in facilities management and two years college education. Full-time, 12-month position begins July 1. More information from Nelson Kilmer at 316 327-8217.

Principal, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont. Qualifications include teacher's certificate and proven administrative experience. Theological training and cross-cultural experience would be helpful. Position begins Aug. 15; application deadline is May 24. Applications should be sent to Leroy Shantz, 205 Bellehaven Dr., Waterloo, ON N2J 3L4.

Special education teacher, Locust Grove Mennonite School, Smoketown, Pa. Responsibilities include working with students in grades 6-8 as part of a learning support team. Contact Dave Helmus at 717 394-7107.

Summer staff openings, Highland Retreat, Bergton, Va. Positions for counselors, assistant cooks, and a lifeguard are available. More information available from 540 852-3226.

Teaching positions, Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Va. Full-time opening in grade 6 instruction and part-time opening in French instruction. Full-time athletic director opening, with physical and health education teaching and coaching assignments. More information from 540 432-4500.

• **Change of address:**

A. Don and Martha Augsburger, 535-D Abbyville Rd., Lancaster, PA 17603.

NEW MEMBERS

Akron, Pa.: Sara Herr, Kyle Horst, Penn Miller, and Jonathan Hershey.

East Union, Kalona, Iowa: George Miller, Joanne Miller, Joe Miller, and Seth Tadlock.

Floradale, Ont.: Dana Batchelor.

Forest Hills, Leola, Pa.: Larry McJunkin, Cheryl McJunkin, and Karen Umble.

Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa.: Sue Novak, Dave Novak, and Rob Baker.

Lindale, Harrisonburg, Va.: Karen Eaton, Welby Lehman, Jason Miller, and Michael Swartley.

North Goshen, Goshen, Ind.: Todd Helmuth, Scott Miller, and Erica Miller.

North Lima, Ohio: Bill Simms, Lisa Simms, Jessica Simms, Joan Walker, and B. J. Simms.

Pleasant View, Goshen, Ind.: Jason Hoffer and Matthew Plank.

Roanoke, Eureka, Ill.: Debra Bellos, Kimberly Imhoff, Gretchen Kennell, Andy Graber, Lazaro Moreno, L. G. Stutzman, Tim Baer, Jennifer Baer, and Bob Schmidgall.

Zion, Broadway, Va.: Nicholas Alger, Jodie Baker, Sara Brenneman, Jill Fidler, Joanna Goins, Anthony Hertzler, Cathy Lantz, Karena Showalter, Virginia Showalter, Tara Williams, and Tonya Williams.

John Lapp's John Hancocks. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—John A. Lapp, Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) fifth executive secretary, signs thank-you letters to contributors. Lapp has signed nearly 200,000 such letters during his 12-year tenure. "It has been an extraordinary privilege for me to invite support for this ministry of remembering the poor," Lapp wrote in his final fund appeal recently. "I am humbled by the generosity of so many people." Ron Mathies is his successor.

MCC needs more than $2.3 million (U.S.) each month to respond to short-term and long-term crises. This year MCC is expecting 77 percent of its international program to be supported by contributions—the highest percentage in decades.

BIRTHS

Ellis, Julie Herrmann and Lonnie, Roanoke, Ill., Brandon Lee (second child), March 15.

Freed, Donna and Daniel, Souderton, Pa., Krista Danielle (third child), April 6.

Gingrich, Lonna Stoltzfus and Myron, Madison, Wis., Jakob Stoltzfus (first child), Jan. 18.

Harley, Mona Jean Harley and Alan Tripp, Madison, Wis., Amika Tripp (first child), Feb. 24.

Leatherman, Nancy Herstine and Galen, Ottsville, Pa., Marie (second child), March 27.

Lindell Detweiler, Christine Lindell and Philip Detweiler, Cotonou, Benin, West Africa, Annika Christine (second child), April 3.

Mark, Kimberley MacDonald and Paul, Granger, Ind., Hannah Lauren (first child), March 30.

Markham, Tammy Beck and Steve, Goshen, Ind., Dwight Leonard (second child), March 30.

Martin, Kimberly Martin and William J., Lititz, Pa., Blake Alexander (fourth child), March 16.

Miller, Diane Gingerich and Devon E., Goshen, Ind., Nathan Eugene (first child), March 26.

Mumaw, Veva Zimmerman and Jeffrey A., Perkasie, Pa., Joseph Lloyd (third child), April 5.

Sauder, Kathie Oberholtzer and Tony, Philadelphia, Pa., Daniel Amos (second child), April 4.

Schrock, Maree and Kevin, Shipshewana, Ind., Heaven LeAnne (second child), March 26.

Springer, Eileen Lais and Roger, Minier, Ill., Naomi Rae (fourth child), March 31.

Stoltzfus, Lois Crossgrove and Dave, Archbold, Ohio, (twins) Justin Shawn and Marcus Aaron (fourth and fifth children), Jan. 25.

Tarter, Melissa Phibbs and John, Newport News, Va., Olivia Denton (third child), March 26.

VanDiepenbos, Joy Detweiler and Jeff, Syracuse, Ind., Tori Anna (third child), April 8.

Weaver, Janice Garber and Darryl, Lancaster, Pa., Garret Evan (first child), Jan. 13.

Weaver, Lisa Nunemaker and Lonnie, Goshen, Ind., Lorae Michelle (third child), April 4.

Weaver Dyck, Lisa Weaver and Jonathan Dyck, Madison, Wis., John Simon (first child), Jan. 9.

Witmer, Janice Weaver and Lee, Ephrata, Pa., Ciara Brooke (third child), March 20.

Yoder, Shelley Pogue and Rick, Wakarusa, Ind., Reid Michael (second child), March 12.

Young, Irene Hofstetter and Honor, West Salem, Ohio, Scott Andrew (third child), March 17.

Zehr, Michelle Jones and Ricky, Lowville, N.Y., Katelyn Elizabeth (first child), March 3.

Zook, Lynnette and David, Buhler, Kan., Steven David (fourth child), April 1.

MARRIAGES

Birky-Mounsithiraj: Amy Birky, Sturgis, Mich. (Shore), and Viratham Mounsithiraj, Centreville, Mich. (Locust Grove), March 30, by Steve Dintaman and Pam Dintaman.

Crilow-Schreck: Dorothy Crilow, Goshen, Ind. (Holdeman), and Ray Schreck, Goshen, Ind. (Holdeman), March 23, by David Heusinkveld.

Sablehaus-Sturma: Ike Sablehaus, LaGrange, Ind., and Amy Sturma, Shipshewana, Ind. (Shore), March 16, by Harvey Chupp.

DEATHS

Bender, Anna Evelyn, 89, Springs, Pa. Born: Jan. 22, 1907, Springs, Pa., to John H. and Lydia Miller Bender. Died: April 4, 1996, Grantsville, Md. Survivors—sister: Marie B. Haning. Congregational membership: Springs Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 8, Newman Funeral Home, by Earl Yoder. Burial: Springs Mennonite Lower Cemetery.

Detweiler, Oswin F., 82, Souderton, Pa. Born: Jan. 8, 1914, Hatfield, Pa., to Howard Landis and Katie Frederick Freed Detweiler. Died: April 8, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Irvin F., Enos F., Raymond F., Tyson F., Vincent F., Paul F., Emma Benner, Sally Detweiler, Martha Detweiler, Hannah Galanski. Predeceased by: Alverda Detweiler (wife). Funeral: April 11, Souderton Mennonite Homes, by Gerald A. Clemmer and Merlin Hedrick. Burial: Souderton Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Hoover, Ira Jay, 88, Goshen, Ind. Born: May 17, 1907, Wadsworth, Ohio, to Daniel S. and Anna Kreider Hoover. Died: March 16, 1996, Elkhart, Ind. Predeceased by: Clara Mumaw Hoover (wife). Funeral: March 19, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, by Wes Bontreger. Burial: South Cemetery, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church.

Litwiller, Louise Schrag, 94, Lowville, N.Y. Born: Jan. 18, 1902, Belfort, N.Y., to Jacob and Magdelena Martin Schrag. Died: March 29, 1996, Lowville, N.Y. Survivors—daughter: Arvilla Finkenbinder; sisters: Katie Roggie, Ruth Bellar. Predeceased by: William Litwiller (husband). Funeral: April 2, First Mennonite Church, by Lester Bauman, Julius Moser, and Bruce Lyndaker. Burial: First Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Miller, Katie L. Swartzendruber Brenneman, 88, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Feb. 5, 1908, Iowa County, Iowa, to Christian and Magdalena Bender Swartzendruber. Died: April 2, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—husband: Cyrus J. Miller; children: Stanley, Raymond, Rollin, Shirley Hochstedler; stepchildren: Alvin J. and Dale Miller, Mary Yoder, Eldora Flatt, Elnora Borntrager, Veva Herschberger; 14 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, 31 step-grandchildren, 58 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ezra K. Brenneman (first husband), Eldon Brenneman (son), Rose Mary Brenneman (daughter), and Donna Belle Biggerstaff (stepdaughter). Funeral and burial: April 5, East Union Mennonite Church, by Noah Helmuth, Mick Murray, and David L. Yoder.

Schwartzentruber, Harold John, 71. Born: Oct. 5, 1924, East Zorra Twp., Ont., to David and Barbara Streicher Schwartzentruber. Died: March 20, 1996, Tavistock, Ont., of leukemia. Survivors—wife: Isabel Jean Ruby Schwartzentruber; sons: Dale, Paul; brothers and sister: Glen, Earl, Betty Bearinger; 3 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Terrance Wayne Schwartzentruber (son). Congregational membership: Tavistock Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: March 22, East Zorra Mennonite Church, by Darrel Toews.

Yordy, L. Mae, 99, Flanagan, Ill. Born: Nov. 20, 1896, Woodford County, Ill., to Peter and Barbara Stalter Saltzman. Died: March 30, 1996, Chenoa, Ill. Survivors—daughters: Aldine Hartzler, Merna Holoway, Verna Long; 11 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, 9 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: William A. Yordy (husband). Funeral: April 2, Waldo Mennonite Church, by Lester Zook. Burial: Waldo Cemetery.

Zehr, Martha May Widrick, 87, Lowville, N.Y. Born: Sept. 18, 1908, Kirschnerville, N.Y., to Daniel and Fanny Moser Widrick. Died: April 5, 1996, Grottoes, Va. Survivors—children: Floyd J., Walter E., Ralph D., Milton J., Joseph J., Eileen Lehman, Pauline Myers, LaVerne Yoder, Margaret Gingerich, Carolyn Lyndaker, Donna Keener; 40 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elias M. Zehr (husband), and Judith Marie (daughter). Funeral: April 9, Lowville Mennonite Church, by Evan S. Zehr and Richard Zehr. Burial: Conservative Mennonite Cemetery.

Obituary correction: Katherine Ruth Slagell Neville's (Apr. 2, 1996, *Gospel Herald*) hometown was LaJunta, Colo. She was predeceased by her daughter, Carolyn Hindry, and survived by her sister, Bernice Miller.

Arm wrestling outreach. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Youth Evangelism Service (YES) volunteer Chris Jones (left) arm wrestles Justin Booth at Cross Connection youth center in New Holland, Pa. Two Mennonite churches, Petra Christian Fellowship and Weaverland Mennonite, are operating the community youth center. A YES team of four young adults helps to staff the center along with volunteers from local churches.

Many of the teenagers come from troubled home situations and have drug and alcohol abuse in their backgrounds. "Sometimes it's a tough group to work with," says YES team leader Neal Sensenig. "Progress is slow, but we really like it."—*Jewel Showalter*

Newspaper

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THE LAST WORD

One small candle

"Out of small beginnings the greater things have been produced by [God's] hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and, as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation."—William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation,* 1620-1647

There are some advantages to being part of a small denomination like Mennonite. One of them should not be an exaggerated opinion of our influence.

According to the 1996 edition of the *Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches,* last year there were 96,000 members of the Mennonite Church in the United States. Compare that to 2.3 million members of the Assemblies of God, 5.2 million Evangelical Lutherans, 15.6 million Southern Baptists, and 60 million Catholics.

With statistics like that, I know that in most meetings—outside our own—we Mennonites count for very little when talk turns to Christians and their influence in our world.

That's why I took notice when I heard "Mennonite" in a speech by the U.S. Secretary of Interior, Bruce Babbitt, to a group of religious journalists attending the annual convention of the Associated Church Press in Phoenix, Ariz., Apr. 10-13. Babbitt agreed to make the speech to our group because he believes strongly in the relationship of moral values and the care of God's earth.

He is especially concerned about efforts to revise the Endangered Species Act, which some in the U.S. Congress are currently trying to do. They say it's because they want less government. Babbitt says it's because they think the earth is to be used, not managed.

Congress needs to listen to the values of the nation's religious leaders, said Babbitt. Then he went on: "For example, last October five leaders from the Presbyterian, Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, Jewish, and *Mennonite* faiths—representing tens of millions of church-goers—all wrote different letters opposing a bill to cripple the Endangered Species Act. They opposed it not for technical or scientific or agricultural or medicinal reasons but for spiritual reasons" (italics mine).

The letter to which Babbitt referred was sent to Congress by Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office. Signed by director J. Daryl Byler, it asked Congress not to support a bill that would abandon species recovery goals and remove habitat protection. "We need to hear and obey the command of our Creator who instructed us to be stewards of God's creation," Babbitt quoted from the letter.

Apparently that was a subversive message. During a hearing on the Endangered Species Act, one committee member wanted to put the five letters into the *Congressional Record*—usually a perfunctory move. But, according to a report in *The Washington Post,* this time the committee chair balked, saying he wouldn't allow it until he knew which churches had written and what they said. "Only after protests . . . were the letters begrudgingly allowed," said Babbitt.

Of course, Babbitt's speech was political. Government control, as evident in the Endangered Species Act and other legislation, is a hot topic in U.S. politics these days. Babbitt, a Democrat, sees a Republican Congress as the "bad guys" out to use the earth however they please. Babbitt also knew he was talking to journalists who control some 200 Protestant and Catholic publications and try to influence what our 29.4 million readers think.

Politics aside, I found what he said worth noting. Babbitt bases his care for the environment on his Christian faith. He notes that God's covenant after the flood, symbolized in the rainbow, was not just with humans but with all living creatures. And he calls for the religious community to uphold its obligation to be stewards of God's creation.

Indeed, said Babbitt, we need to assert and amplify those values, "whether or not Congress wants to hear them."

A helpful reminder. As God's disciples, we are called to articulate our values, even though we may be small and our influence minor. What we say may get no further than the *Congressional Record*—if that. But it could also become the illustration for a speech—and maybe, just maybe, influence someone somewhere to change an opinion that counts.

One small candle, William Bradford, an early American religious and colonial leader called it. But that one small candle can light others—sometimes to shine on an entire nation.—*jlp*

May 7, 1996

"Enlarging Our Coast" has been the vision of Calvary Community since its beginning. Today this congregation, the largest in Virginia Conference, continues to reach out to all. "We won't sacrifice evangelism at any cost. If we can't evangelize, we can't exist."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Kenneth L. Gibble:
When the door is closed 6

Showalter named president of Goshen (Ind.) College 9

Mennonites divert taxes from war to health 11

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

ELKHART LIBRARY MAY 6 '96 ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARIES

Calvary Community Church:

'If we can't evangelize, we can't exist'

There is not much that is orthodox—at least not orthodox Mennonite—about this congregation. But Calvary is the kind of church "you can't overlook."

by Valerie Weaver

"Say to your neighbor, 'You are MORE than what they said you were,' " Bishop Leslie Francisco III says to his audience, a colorful African *kente* cloth draped around his neck.

"You are MORE than what they said you were," we repeat obediently, some 600 voices strong. The woman in a purple dress next to me gives me a wide-mouthed smile as we say it to each other.

Leslie Francisco, more commonly known as "Bishop" by his parishioners at Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., has taken the floor after a lengthy time of singing led by a large and swaying choir. The enthusiasm that I thought couldn't get any higher actually swells as Francisco shouts out verses and jumps up and down on one leg, the congregation throwing back hallelujahs and amens like exclamation marks and periods at the end of his sentences.

Franciso wipes the sweat from his forehead after a particularly successful illustration about stirring pink paint in a can (the gifts of

"Calvary is here for the long haul. We're committed to the tenets of the faith and to the Mennonite Church. We're here to stay, unless you don't want us here."

the Holy Spirit and one's natural potential) so that it overtakes the filmy residue of "gray matter on top."

"I know you're ready to go home," he says, pocketing his handkerchief.

"Preach! Take your time!" someone in the audience calls out as another murmurs an affirming, "That's right."

"Stop Thinking Small," the theme of the sermon this morning, applies not only to this Sunday's message but to the well-choreographed church itself—from the well-dressed parking lot attendants who "assist the deacons in ground operations" (according to an article in the *Calvary Chronicle* newsletter), to the white-gloved ushers who receive the offering in gold buckets, to the young men in charge of videotaping and recording who walk importantly between their posts in the sanctuary. It is a credo that Bishop Francisco stresses in many of his sermons—available on tape through the ten-page audio catalog—like "You Got the Right Stuff," "Saints, Don't Let the Devil Get You Down," and "Rising Above the Clouds."

This, the largest congregation in Virginia Mennonite Conference, broadcasts services on television, hosts a TV talk show two nights a week, runs a school of over 200 students, and boasts an organizational flow chart with some 30 ministries that would make many lucrative businesses look like shoestring operations. The church has plans to open a service station and possibly a restaurant in 1997. "If you're going to buy gas, why not buy it from the church?" Leslie says. "It's not orthodox, but we don't see any reason it can't happen."

There's not much that is orthodox—or at least not orthodox Mennonite—about this congregation. Spearheaded by brothers Leslie and Steve Francisco, the mostly African-American congregation has grown from 69 members in 1991 to 591 at the end of 1995.

"Calvary is the kind of church you can't overlook," says Stan Maclin, former president of the African-American Mennonite Association, adding that the church serves as a model congregation in the Hampton Roads area.

"We try to center ministry around meeting the needs of people," says Leslie. "We believe in scratching people where they are itching."

Steve and Leslie, who sold a profitable building business to go into ministry, say that they gained this evangelistic zeal from their father, Leslie II, who ministered at Calvary Community Church for almost 30 years. They say their father's emphasis on reaching out "is still very much alive today." His widow Naomi is the obviously well-respected matriarch of the congregation and called alternately "nana, mama, grandma, and sister Naomi" by members.

Calvary Community Church grew out of a children's ministry begun by Warwick River Mennonite Church in Newport News in 1952. Eight mission workers who were concerned that only white children were attending children's functions at their church formed a Bible school for African-American children in another

Calvary Community's leadership team (from left): Minister Ronnie Pride, Pastor Steven Francisco, Bishop Leslie W. Francisco III, Minister Steven Brown, and Minister Michael Littlejohn.

area of town. Leslie II, along with other adults in the area, became involved through younger family members who attended these activities. Leslie II became increasingly involved in the ministry and was ordained to copastor with Nelson Burkholder in 1966.

Naomi speaks of those early days of the church with an ever-so-slight smile on her face. "They bought him [Leslie II] a plain coat," she says of the missionaries. "He agreed to wear it until it wore out, and then he dressed like us again," she recalls.

Naomi and the other women gave up jewelry during that time and also wore coverings until the late 1970s "I'll tell you why we stopped wearing them [coverings]," says Naomi. "The missionaries brought them along, and when they wore out, we didn't know where to get them from."

In 1983 "the Lord gave [Leslie II] a vision to build a church in Hampton," says his son Leslie. Most of the missionaries returned to their home congregations when the church moved.

An 8,000-square-foot building was completed in 1985. The current church and school building, once owned by a local telephone company, was the site of an outreach from that Hampton church, and in 1987 the two congregations merged because both were struggling, according to Leslie. The congregation is now eyeing seven acres of land adjacent to their current site in the center of Hampton's busiest district, with visions of an auditorium to seat 1,200 people and a gymnasium. Leslie says they also want to plant seven churches, and he and Steve are grooming several men on a ministerial team as possible church planters.

"Vision" seems to be a key word in the Francisco vocabulary. Leslie reveals "Calvary's Yearly Vision" for the upcoming year at the New Year's Eve service—a statement kept secret with the zealotry of a parent hiding a Christmas present. Steve finds out about 15 days before the service so he can have a banner made, and he says the service feels like a party. "Everyone is saying, 'What's it going to be? What's it going to be?' " Steve says.

The vision statements from past years are listed in the 40-page "Tithers' Appreciation Reception" booklet, along with reports from the ministries of the church, giving graphs and flow charts. The vision for 1996 is "The Remnant Shall Reap the Harvest"—a statement that the ministers incorporate in sermons and ministries for the upcoming year.

Part of the Sunday morning crowd of some 600 participants at Calvary Community.

"Reaping the Harvest," along with its strong evangelistic undertones, also seems to hold economic meaning for many at Calvary Community. A newsletter article tells about one family in the church who came forward during an altar call that summoned those "desirous of a job or house to come forward and claim their blessing and speak into existence the blessings of God." The article says that the couple's recent purchase of a house is "proof that God is a God of truth whose blessings maketh rich."

The philosophy of trusting in God, believing in yourself, and working hard to get ahead drives many of the church's ministries, such as the "Man in Demand" and "Elegant Ladies" clubs for young people. "Most of the time it is something as simple as a 'lack of knowledge' (Hosea 4:6) that destroys our people and causes them to lose hope," writes Glen Guyton about the church's Community Unity Day in the church newsletter. Residents of Hampton who attend the Community Unity Day every year find booths about budgeting, dressing for success, and job counseling. "Our hope to unify the community and church, so that together we can reclaim our streets, our lives, and restore our value system . . . has finally begun."

Calvary Community's relationship with the Mennonite Church seems tenuous at times, partly because of racial and cultural differences between the church and more traditional Men-

"Our hope has just begun—to unify the community and the church, so that together we can reclaim our streets and our lives and restore our value system."

nonite congregations, and partly because over 30 members of the congregation are also members of the military. The Virginia Conference decided in January to "remain in full fellowship" with congregations like Calvary Community who have members of the military in their midst, but also drafted a statement against violence (see story in the Jan. 30 issue of *Gospel Herald*).

The Francisco brothers say the congregation's stress on Jesus as example and the emphasis on community at Calvary Community are traits of Anabaptism that the church values. Leslie says that the congregation's interaction with the Mennonite Church—through conference music festivals, assemblies like Wichita '95, and a meeting of the General Board last year hosted by the church—is a way that Calvary Community members choose to straddle the gulf between the culture and theology of mainstream Mennonites and their own approach. "Calvary is here for the long haul," Leslie says. "We're committed to the tenets of the faith and to the Mennonite Church. We're here to stay, unless you don't want us here."

Staying doesn't mean that Calvary will ever fit neatly into the Mennonite Church—the denominational titles and focus just "wouldn't work here," according to Steve.

"When you get hung up on the denominational aspect, you dilute the message of what Jesus is," says Leslie. "We don't push 'Mennonite, Mennonite, Mennonite'—we're trying to produce Christians first. It wouldn't work if we plastered 'Mennonite' over everything; we would close the door to many people."

And with their father's vision of "Enlarging Our Coast" still hovering above them as the church's motto, "closing the door" is the last thing Steve and Leslie Francisco want to do. "We won't sacrifice evangelism at any cost," Leslie says. "If we can't evangelize, we can't exist."

Valerie Weaver is assistant editor of Gospel Herald. *She attends Kingview Mennonite Church in Scottdale, Pa.*

Challenging the church about subtle racism

"When you start playing the Mennonite game, you're telling me that I'm not really a part of you," says Leslie Francisco, pastor at Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va. Being the largest congregation in Virginia Conference doesn't make the mostly African-American congregation a majority in the Mennonite Church, and it certainly doesn't erase the racial and ethnic lines.

Francisco, who was recently appointed to a four-year term as president of the African-American Mennonite Association, says that the racial differences flared for the youth from his congregation when they attended Philadelphia '93. His eyes tighten in concern as he recounts the alienation they felt while there and an incident the group felt was racially motivated.

And although the youth felt much more a part of the scene at the Wichita '95 convention, Francisco says that the subtle racism in the church won't just go away on its own.

"The church has to have sensitivity to include us," Francisco says, "without telling us how to do it, but allowing us to share with you how it works for us."

Sharing "how it works for us" takes form in Calvary Community's contributions during meetings like the annual Tidewater Mennonite Fellowship Music Festival. Previously called a "hymn fest" and featuring music that few Calvary members knew, the program now includes the pulsing spirituals and gospel songs led by the Calvary choir and band. "I can appreciate four-part harmony," Francisco laughs, "but you can appreciate gospel, too."

Francisco says he is encouraged by this and other changes in the Mennonite Church, such as the increasing numbers of African Americans in leadership in Mennonite institutions. But he also warns against the congratulatory tone that sometime accompanies such changes. "Don't receive me as a token," he says, "but as someone with a real contribution."

—*Valerie Weaver*

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people. . . . Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."—1 Pet. 2:9a-10

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READERS SAY

The letter from the 75 pastors who attended the Promise Keepers clergy conference (Apr. 9) left me with some concern. Are we now defining our associations or faithfulness by whether we attend a meeting such as this? If not, why did we need the long list of pastor's names from these five conferences attached to the letter?

A quick check of the *Mennonite Yearbook* suggests that the five conferences from which these 75 came have just over 600 pastors. Are the 75 who felt the Holy Spirit asking them to go more righteous, or do they have greater spiritual insight than those who felt the Holy Spirit has something else for them to do for those three days?

Now I am blessed by these meetings of inspiration, both within our Mennonite denomination as well as outside. I too am challenged by the excitement and the enthusiasm of 40,000 or so Christians worshiping together. But do we need to divide ourselves by identifying those of us who were there, and by implication list those not there? I am glad I happen to be from another conference so that only my church and family need to know where I was for those days.

In addition, I've never seen a listing of pastors who attended minister's weeks at Eastern Mennonite Semnary, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, or Conrad Grebel College. We pastors have been challenged to faithfulness in these settings as well.

While I share a concern for faithfulness in the church, the quote from a speaker about "fog in the pew" disturbs me. I live close to a lake, and when it is foggy, we often hear the ships' fog horns. The loud noise only tells us the ships are there. It doesn't tell us whether they are on course.

Maybe the editor was trying to suggest something by printing this letter with a gray background to highlight it.

J. Lester Kehl
Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

As a Mennonite for over a quarter of a century who selected this church by personal choice, I am a bit uncomfortable with the call for repentance expressed in the letter from the 75 pastors (Apr. 9). What disturbs me most is the attitude toward Mennonite institutions.

I will always remember leaving Big Thompson Canyon in Colorado after digging mud from an elderly man's home. At the checkpoint, the sheriff commented that every known religious group and charity had visited the canyon to access the damage after the flood. But it was Mennonite Disaster Service that had come to work.

Mennonite Mutual Aid grants have assisted those in need for many years. They have even made health insurance available for uninsurable Mennos who otherwise would have none.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates is another group that has focused on self-help programs and assisted thousands around the world to become self-sufficient.

In other words, the Mennonite church has earned a reputation for proactive programs. I continue to be proud of my decision 26 years ago to become Mennonite. Being organized offers many advantages.

So I don't understand the observation in the pastors' letter that pride in our programs causes us to have a low view of God. It is through Christ's teachings that we have acquired skills necessary to help ourselves and, most important, to assist others.

The suggestion that we repent of our pride of history is frightening. Those who ignore history are condemned to repeat it.

F. Jim Parks
Palmyra, Va.

What MRS Can Teach Us About PK (Feb. 6). Promise Keepers is more than a movement. It is God working in the lives of men by encouraging, challenging, and empowering them to become men of God and leaders in their homes. It shows men how to honor and love their wives and how to love and care for their children.

Through Promise Keepers, fathers are being saved, walls between races are coming down, and men are becoming accountable to each other.

Polarization, prejudice, and fear are keeping some men from experiencing God's blessing and power to become persons of integrity and men of God. In Mark 9:38-40, Jesus noted that whoever was not against him was for him. Men who attend Promise Keepers conferences are witnesses to how God is working in men's lives around the world.

Clair C. Heimbach
Selinsgrove, Pa.

When the door is closed

The painful truth is that nearly every time that a closed door separates us from God, it is we who have closed it. And we keep it closed for many reasons: pride, fear, unbelief.

by Kenneth L. Gibble

We noticed the doors first. In the Italian neighborhood of South Philadelphia, people live in row houses. Many of them virtual look-alikes in size and exterior appearance—all except for the doors.

My wife, Ann, and I were fascinated by these doors one day a few years back when we took a walk during a visit to the "City of Brotherly Love." Some doors we saw were painted in bright colors. Some boasted impressive-looking brass knockers. Other doors were made mostly of glass. Still others featured elaborate grillwork. Obviously an expensive door was a status symbol in this neighborhood.

Why are there doors? They allow people to enter and leave a building. Or to say it another way, doors exist to let people in and to keep people out.

These days doors mostly serve to keep people out, I think. Some of us can remember a time when doors were kept closed for other reasons. Living as we did in a rural area, our family usually didn't bother locking the doors to our house; there didn't seem to be a need for it. Only when we went away on an extended trip did we lock up.

Doors were kept closed for sanitation and heat conservation. Doors kept out summer flies and winter drafts. In fact, my mother had an expression she used when one of her children came into the house and left the back door open. "Were you born in a sawmill?" she would ask. I often wondered where that expression came from; was it because sawmills have no doors? But we got the message—go back and close the door.

I haven't heard anyone ask, "Were you born in a sawmill?" for a long time. Probably because we don't let doors stand open anymore. Doors are closed and securely locked these days, not to keep out the flies or the cold, but to keep out intruders. Or we lock them to at least keep out our fear of such things happening.

Jesus talked about doors. Luke's Gospel tells us that as Jesus was going to Jerusalem he stopped at the towns along the way to teach the people. On one of those occasions someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" (Luke 13:22)

No doubt this question was an inference that the one who asked made from what he or she had heard Jesus teaching. And, in fact, a review of what comes just before this passage in Luke reveals that Jesus had been making some rather harsh statements about human greed and hypocrisy and injustice. He had especially lambasted the Pharisees, who were held in high regard for their knowledge and scrupulous observance of the law.

Maybe the one who asked Jesus the question about only a few being saved was getting worried. If the Pharisees are in trouble, this person may have thought, what hope is there for someone like me? "Lord, will only a few be saved?"

As usual, Jesus gave an indirect answer to this question. "Strive to enter through the narrow door," he said, "for many . . . will try to enter and will not be able." Jesus didn't say why they won't be able to enter. Perhaps their egos are so inflated that they couldn't squeeze through or they have overindulged their appetites for food, wealth, or power.

Jesus asked his listeners how they would feel if they found themselves locked outside the house, pounding on the door, crying, "Lord, open to us," and the answer comes through the closed door: "I don't know you."

"But Lord," they say, "we ate and drank with you, and you came to our town and taught us." And the answer comes back, "Go away, you evildoers."

How will you feel, asked Jesus, when you see the door opened not only to the revered saints of old but to people of your own day from all over the world who speak strange languages and dress in odd-looking clothes; people who don't live in nice neighborhoods and don't keep themselves washed and combed according to middle-class standards? How will you feel, Jesus said, when you see people like that welcomed in and you are thrown out?

"We won't feel very good about that at all," his listeners probably thought. "But why are you saying this to us, Jesus?" they probably wondered. And today we may also wonder why

Jesus talks about the door being closed.

We all have known closed doors. Some of us remember a teacher locking the door because we were late to class, or a door shut against us because of age, gender, appearance, sexual orientation, disability. Some of us know a relationship that has ended because someone has locked the door of their heart against us.

Closed doors often cause great pain. So naturally, we may wonder why Jesus talked about the door being closed. Shouldn't the door to God, to the kingdom, and to the church, always be open?

Ideally, yes. But there are times when the only thing that can bring us to our senses is a door closed against us.

In the movie *The Field,* a murder has been committed in a small, ingrown Irish community. In his desire to own a field, a farmer has killed a man, an outsider, who threatened to take the field away from him.

Sunday comes and the people gather in the church for mass. The priest stands up and says to the people:

"Three days ago in this parish a man was murdered. The police have been asking questions, and everywhere they go, they are met with silence; frightening and evil silence that protects a murderer.

"Among you is a murderer, and through your silence you share in his guilt. You're all murderers. Do not defile this church with your shame. Today I will lock the gates of this church. The bell will be silent. Confessions will not be heard. And so it will be until justice is done."

The priest pauses, then steps out from behind the pulpit and raises his arms. "You're all trespassing in the house of God. Get out," he shouts. "Get out! Get out!" Silently the people leave the church until all are outside, and the priest locks the gate.

As I watched this dramatic scene I asked myself if the priest had done the right thing. And I wondered if I would have had the courage to do what he did. One thing was clear to me; his action accomplished what just another sermon about right and wrong could never have done. There are times when the only thing that can bring us to our senses is a door closed against us.

But not closed forever. The priest said that the church would be closed until justice was done. When Jesus talked about a closed door, there is no indication that the door would remain closed. On another occasion, he told his listeners: "Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you" (Matt. 7:7). The door will be opened, if it's up to the Holy One.

But the painful truth is that nearly every time a closed door separates us from God, it is we who have closed it. We keep it closed for lots of reasons: our pride, our fear of having to change, our inability to believe that God can ever accept us and love us. There are as many reasons for keeping the door closed as there are people who choose to do it.

I remember one of my Sunday school teachers showing us a picture of Jesus knocking at a big wooden door and telling us that the door was really the door to our hearts. "Your heart," she said to each of us in the class, "and yours, and yours." And then she taught us a song, most of which I don't remember, except for the chorus:

When Jesus comes in,
he will save you from sin,
but you must open the door.

When I got a bit older, I was amused as I recalled that unsophisticated lesson of Sunday school. Both the song and my teacher's words seemed much too simplistic.

There are still some doors that I cannot open for myself or for others. I can pray for them to be opened, and that itself is worth having faith for. But I've learned that many times, when the door is closed, it is firmly barred from my side.

And from time to time that song I learned in Sunday school teases its way into my brain:

When Jesus comes in,
he will save you from sin,
but you must open the door.

Then my prayer is for the courage and the grace to open.

Kenneth L. Gibble is a freelance writer and a member of the Church of the Brethren who lives in Arlington, Va.

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Showalter named 14th president of Goshen College

Goshen, Ind. (GC)—Shirley Hershey Showalter has been elected the 14th president of Goshen College (GC) by the Mennonite Board of Education (MBE).

Showalter, a member of the GC faculty since 1976, will assume her responsibilities Jan. 1, 1997, following a six-month period of preparation. She is currently on sabbatical leave as a visiting scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Henry Weaver was earlier named president for the six-month interim beginning July 1. Victor Stoltzfus, president since 1984, will retire June 30.

MBE announced Showalter's appointment April 29 upon the recommendation of the GC board of overseers and presidential search committee.

At GC Showalter has taught in the departments of history and English and was director of continuing education from 1979-82. She was also project director for a number of major grants.

Showalter chaired the task force on curriculum revision in the humanities (1990-92) and was elected by department chairs to be the first chair of the academic council (1990-91). She has just completed a four-year term on the board of directors of the American Association for Higher Education.

Showalter was vice chair and member of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church (1984-88) and has published articles in a wide variety of publications.

A native of Lititz, Pa., Showalter graduated with a B.A. in English from Eastern Mennonite College. She received an M.A. in American civilization in 1974 from the University of Texas at Austin and a Ph.D. in American civilization from the University of Texas in 1981.

Shirley Hershey Showalter, 14th president of Goshen College

Showalter, 47, is married to Stuart W. Showalter, GC professor of communication. They led a Study-Service Term (SST) to Côte d'Ivoire in 1993. They were also directors of the SST group in Haiti in 1981-82.

The couple has two children, Anthony and Kate, and belong to College Mennonite Church.

The search committee cited Showalter's ability to relate to GC's diverse constituencies as one of her most important strengths. "Shirley combines a commitment to faith with a commitment to the liberal arts," said Elvin Kraybill, MBE chair. "Her life exemplifies a deep commitment to the Mennonite Church and its ministries. She has cultivated a spirituality centered in Jesus Christ. She also has a passion for excellence in Christian higher education."

Unifying head and heart. "I think the 21st century will be a time when the wholistic inquiry we have tried to achieve at GC will have more partners," Showalter said. "This approach—the effort to reunify head and heart, theory and practice, faith and learning—is the new direction of higher education."

Her early goals include dealing with the problem of the sometimes declining enrollment at the college and re-establishing the position of provost, said Showalter in a press conference April 29.

Showalter also said continued contact with students is a major goal. She hopes to teach one class every other year and to have an "open door policy" for students, according to an article in the *Goshen News*. "My goal has been to be a good teacher," she said. "Now I will become a teacher of a larger classroom."

MCC requests funds for aid to Lebanese in crisis

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee is appealing for funds to provide emergency assistance to refugees displaced by the shelling in Lebanon and to help with rebuilding efforts when a ceasefire occurs.

About 400,000 refugees have been forced to leave their homes as a result of the conflict between Israeli forces and Hezbollah guerrillas. An estimated 164 people in Lebanon have been killed by the shelling, the vast majority of them civilians and many of them children.

Situation is bleak. "The real tragedy is the suffering of the average Lebanese families," says Ed Epp, director of MCC's Middle East programs. Nearly 100 civilians were killed when a United Nations shelter about 12 miles south of Jmeijme was shelled by Israeli guns. MCC has worked in the Jmeijme and has been planning to put in a water catchment system.

MCC will spend at least $100,000 on the emergency. About $5,100 worth of relief supplies like food, milk, diapers, and milk formula for babies have already been distributed with the help of Lebanese chapters of the Red Cross, Red Crescent, and YMCA.

"The situation is bleak," writes Joan Barkman in a recent report from Beirut where she directs MCC activity in the country. Ninety villages in the south have been damaged, including Tibniin and Aiti—the area in which MCC has centered its programs for the last 15 years. Requests for help are rising as the crisis continues, Barkman said.

Most refugees are currently staying with relatives or friends. This will work in the short-term but will be difficult in the long-term as food supplies and the money to buy them with are exhausted. Sanitation and water services in major centers like Beirut and Sidon are overloaded by the sudden influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Making matters worse is the destruction, by Israeli shelling, of electrical power plants and aqueducts. Drinkable water sources are rapidly being depleted. Roads were being shelled last week as well, cutting food and medical supply lines to people staying in shelters and villages in southern Lebanon.

The shelling has also disrupted farming in the region. "The planting season for some crops has been missed, while the harvest of other crops is over. The implications on livelihood [of the farmers] is immense," says Epp. Many farmers have greenhouses made from plastic and steel. These have been targeted and destroyed, along with the homes and access roads to the fields.

Donations to MCC's relief and reconstruction efforts in Lebanon can be marked "MCC Lebanon relief" and sent to any MCC office.

New Anabaptist church emerges in Ivory Coast independent of Mennonites

Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) staff writer Tom Price recently traveled to Côte d'Ivoire as part of a 17-day trip to Africa. This is the second in a series about Mennonites in West Africa.—Editor

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (MBM)—A former Baptist leader, who has embraced the ideals of the 16th-century Anabaptist movement, has formed a new denomination here.

ANABAPTISTS IN WEST AFRICA

Raymond Affouka Eba has founded the Protestant Anabaptist Church of Ivory Coast, which is now seeking recognition from the world's Mennonites. Already three autonomous congregations with nearly 200 combined members officially have become part of the church.

"He came to Anabaptism and actually started a denomination and nine churches without ever meeting a Western missionary," says James Krabill, MBM's outgoing West Africa director. "This is truly someone who is attracted to an idea without an institutional face on it at all. He didn't even know there were Mennonites in the country."

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Journalists have announced the church's beginning, and leaders of many congregations are calling Eba to inquire about joining the group. Eba has written three booklets about his experiences, as well as a seven-page treatise on where his former church doctrinally departed from orthodox Christian belief.

Eba's congregation in Yopougon, a suburb of Abidjan, was formed Nov. 30, 1994, when 16 members were baptized the first Sunday. The congregation doubled before Christmas 1994, and today includes about 100 members. Eba has begun 11 new cell groups since starting the new church. In addition, 47 of his former cell groups have told Eba they want to join the Protestant Anabaptist Church. But Eba is moving cautiously, telling them he wants any congregations that join the emerging movement to have a good sense of what they're getting into.

"This is growing so rapidly, I hardly know what to do with it. The thing I feel the most now is a need to further train myself," says Eba, who has asked the worldwide Anabaptist community through MBM for assistance.

Last fall, a student at the Evangelical Center for Formation in Communication for Africa, where Krabill is a professor of history, saw a sign for the Protestant Anabaptist church. Exchanges of correspondence led to a meeting between Krabill and Eba in September.

"I was reaching out to find any Mennonite I could," Eba says. Since then, Eba has devoured all the French-language editions of Anabaptist writings given him by Krabill, including J. C. Wenger's *Who Are the Mennonites?* MBM may consider providing additional training for Eba at the Foyer Grebel Mennonite Study Centre in Paris or through a visit to Mennonite World Conference in 1997 in India.

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"This is going to be an Anabaptist church no matter what we either say or do," Krabill says. "He is committed to this new direction, and I don't think we have any other choice. The question now is, 'How can we help the best?' "

Eba converted to Christianity in 1984 at the age of 33, after dabbling in mystical spiritual powers and becoming heavily involved in secret societies. He told his story widely in radio addresses and published accounts. Already he was a successful small businessman who approached the study of Christianity with the same vigor he previously devoted to secret societies. It was in his study of church history that he first encountered the Anabaptists as he tried to find the origins of his Baptist denomination.

Three characteristics of Anabaptists attracted Eba to explore the movement: Anabaptists' understanding of and approach to the Bible; "the spirit of peace" that he says is prevalent among Anabaptist groups; and Anabaptists' understanding of holy communion, in which Jesus is believed present in the gathered community rather than in consecrated bread and wine.

"I felt like I was called to new life, to a new beginning," says Eba, who rejected offers to pastor from several large congregations. "The more I study the Anabaptists, the more I realize that being converted means being born anew, so one's whole life is changed. The quality of life in Christ is the proof of conversion."

After praying and fasting over his concerns, Eba decided to create a West African version of the churches formed by the early Anabaptists. "I felt God called me to start this Anabaptist church," he says.

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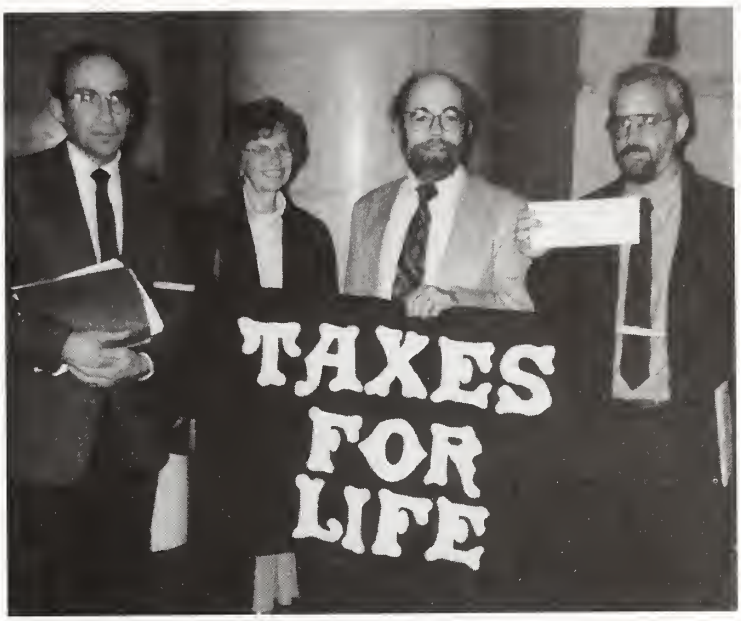
At the same time, Eba was leery of perpetuating the schisms that seem to afflict Christianity. While this transpires, the Ivoirian government is looking at tightening regulations for church groups, according to Eba. At the request of the Catholic Church in Côte d'Ivoire, the government will require all church founders to have a graduate degree in theology and mandate that all pastors be licensed.

"That's the challenge I will have to face: I will partly contribute to dividing a church and starting a new one," Eba says. "My concern is to show Anabaptism was at the source of these Baptist churches and to show I am not creating a new sect, but that Anabaptism has a long history and is a part of the Christian family."—*Tom Price*

Raymond Affouka Eba, founder of the Protestant Anabaptist Church of Ivory Coast, came upon Anabaptism while studying church history. He started the denomination and nine churches without ever having met a Western missionary.

MBM and Mennonite Central Committee have called for prayer and financial support for Liberian peacemaker Samuel Gbadye Doe (featured in the "Anabaptists in West Africa" article in the April 30 issue of Gospel Herald*) who is attempting to come to the United States to study at Eastern Mennonite University. Monrovia's airport has been seriously damaged since the violent conflict escalated April 6, and Doe and his family have been unable to leave the country.*



Taxes for Life delegates present a check of diverted war taxes for health needs of low-income families to the governor's office in Harrisburg (Pa.) on April 15. They are (left to right): Herb Myers, Ann Marie Judson, John Stoner, and Dave Schrock-Shenk.

From missiles to medicine:
Mennonites divert taxes from war to health

Lancaster, Pa.—On April 15, the day U.S. income taxes are due, some Mennonites here diverted a portion of their war tax money toward health needs of unemployed persons. They presented a check of $1,000 to the office of Governor Tom Ridge in Harrisburg.

The war tax objectors are part of Taxes for Life—a group that meets to support each other in seeking biblically nonviolent responses to the government's demand for funding of war and military preparations.

Governor Ridge had threatened to cut 260,000 persons off the medical assistance rolls in Pennsylvania, arguing that the money was not available in the state to cover those needs. "We wanted to demonstrate that if wasteful and destructive expenditures in military systems could be redirected, life-giving programs like health care to vulnerable citizens could be well-funded," says member Earl Martin.

Speaking to government actions. On the day following the tax witness, in a perhaps unrelated action, Governor Ridge announced his intention to compromise on his cut-back proposal.

The $1,000 gift came both from diverted federal war tax money and "sympathy money" from supportive friends, according to Martin. For example, Sarah and Herb Myers of Mount Joy, Pa., wrote to the Internal Revenue Service, "How can we continue contributing financially toward the madness and sinfulness of our military system when we have claimed to be conscientious objectors to serving in the military?"

The Myers, Mennonite medical professionals, each withheld $28.50 from their taxes due to the IRS. The $28.50 symbolized a dime for each of the $285 billion the United State government spends on current military expenditures. "We realize the above action is illegal and we do not undertake it lightly," they wrote to the IRS. "We have taught our children that laws are to be obeyed "unless they violate one's commitment to a higher power than the government." But in a democracy, they added, "we must speak clearly toward our government's actions or we too are guilty of complicity."

On April 14, members of the Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster took a celebrative "second offering" in which children and adults walked forward to contribute "sympathy money" to the Taxes for Life effort. They added $575 with that spontaneous offering.

Governor Ridge's representative, after an extensive discussion of the issues with Taxes for Life representatives, received the check only to pass it on to the state treasurer's office. Whether the state treasurer will choose to cash the check marked "diverted war tax money and contributions" remains unknown.

A Mennonite read 42 names of the 168 victims of the Oklahoma City bombing incident during an April 19 memorial service at the site of the federal building that was destroyed last year. Lawrence Hart, a Cheyenne peace chief and member of Koinonia Mennonite Church, Clinton, Okla., read the first 42 names during a commemoration service for family members that began at 9:02 a.m after 168 seconds of silence—exactly one year after the bombing.

Hart says thousands of people attended the event, which family members had requested not include any elected officials. The service was followed by a procession to a convention center where another service was held at 11 a.m. for the broader public.

"I was humbled to be asked [to read the names]," says Hart, who knew one of the victims of the bombing. "It was an awesome task." As names were called, Hart says that family members were able to go beyond a security fence to place mementos on the site. "It was much like a funeral service—except there were 168 families present," Hart says.

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Menno Simons has a new namesake—a tulip. Simons received this special tribute on Feb. 23 at a Friesland flower show, reports the March 2 issue of the *Algemeen Doopsgezind Weekblad*, the Dutch Mennonite weekly. The new variety of tulip was "baptized" by a government official with the words, "I christen you Menno Simons," accompanied by a sprinkling of water. The flower, bred by Jan Ligthart, is red—symbolizing the warmth of the Mennonite faith, the Dutch paper asserted.

Mennonites are celebrating the 500th anniversary of Simons' birth.

—*Mennonite Reporter*

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Burning slips of paper were part of a recent South African women's conference called "Women and the Water of Life." About 55 women watched as the slips of paper on which they had written about their painful experiences were engulfed in flames. The event was part of the closing communion service in Umtata, South Africa.

"We wanted the conference to be a place where South African women could share their hurts in an attempt to begin the healing process," says Jean Isaac, a member of the women's theology group that organized the event and a worker with the Commission on Overseas Mission and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

This was the fourth conference sponsored by the Umtata women's group. They have also published eight Bible study books.—*WMSC Voice*

High school students ask 'What is enough?'

Lancaster, Pa.—No television, no movies or videos, no snacks. Only five outfits, fewer showers, no unnecessary hair and beauty products.

Sound like a punishment for teenagers? Wrong—this is the regimen a number of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School students have taken on for themselves in a campaign called "What is enough?"

For a month from March 13-April 12, students voluntarily changed their lives to use less resources and focus on the needs of others. Instead of spending money on entertainment, they have cleaned up Lancaster County parks and donated hours at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) material resources center. By limiting themselves, the students hope to focus on world need and how it relates to our use of resources.

The project got its impetus from an October chapel on global economics by student Matthew Smucker. Not everyone agreed with his analysis of economic problems and what a Christlike response to Third World brothers and sisters should be, Smucker says, but the issues were new to many students and raised questions.

Thinking about rich and poor. Smucker contacted MCC for more information, and eventually the current campaign came together. Some faculty have participated, but the project was initiated and run by students. "We have guidelines and suggestions, but each person does as you see fit and what is practical for you," says student Ted Spangler. Spangler used a computer only for schoolwork, carpooled when possible, and cut out snacks. "It makes me more aware when I'm eating; when I can't finish my food, I feel horrible," he says.

Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School students (from left) Evan Esch, Mike Poirier, and Carl Martin pack merchandise at the Mennonite Central Committee material resources center. The students took part in service projects and voluntarily changed their lifestyles to use less resources during a campaign called "What is enough?" in March and April. " 'What is enough?' is a question; people must come up with their own solutions," says organizer Matthew Smucker.

Charity Shenk found the campaign wasn't just hardship or privation. Limiting clothing to five outfits is nice, she says. She walked to church and found more time to read without TV or radio. "I've been brought up to think about what I need and don't," she says, "but I still get caught up in buying things I can do without."

Smucker thinks the campaign has students thinking about excessive wealth and poverty: "Are these connected, or does the world have unlimited resources?" Smucker says his view has changed. "I originally thought that as Christians, we have a personal responsibility to follow Christ," not to deal with social issues.

Loving our neighbors.. For Smucker, concern with social issues grows out of faith. Two years ago he began reading the Bible daily and saw that "a huge percentage of Jesus' teaching deals with money," either telling the believer to have less possessions or showing how wealth causes problems. The campaign is "founded on the Christian teaching of loving our neighbors," he says.

On a personal level, justice seems obvious. "If I buy from Charity and she's beating Ted and I see it, it's my responsibility. But to patch Ted up or to say 'Don't' to Charity, yet to continue buying from her" while the problem continues, is clearly wrong, Smucker says. Yet we do this on an international scale without thinking about it, he adds.

Will students continue changes in their lives when the monthlong campaign is over? Probably in some ways and not in others, they agree. "The real point is to get people thinking," says Smucker. " 'What is enough?' is a question; people must come up with their own solutions."

—Ardell Stauffer

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- **Burundi situation worsens.** Mennonite Central Committee workers in Burundi say the situation there is worsening. Last week seven people were shot in Bujumbura, the capital. MCC is asking for prayer for its five workers and for the citizens of Burundi, particularly Christian leaders who may be targets because of their activities working for reconciliation. According to Eric Olfert, MCC Africa co-secrettary, MCC is not at this time considering evacuating the workers. "Burundians say the expatriates' presence is important. Without these outside eyes and ears, they feel Burundi could take the path Rwanda took in 1994," Olfert says.

- **MCC sends food to Cuba.** Mennonite Central Committee is joining four other churches in sending a shipment of Canadian wheat to Cuba through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The food will be designated for seniors, hospitals, and children. Representatives of the church groups visited Cuba in late March to talk to church groups and government officials about ways North Americans could respond to the U.S. embargo. According to Al Doerksen, director of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Cubans are receiving only two-thirds of the food shipped to them two years ago.

- **Joint administrator named.** Missions activities in Latin America of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church will take a step toward integration on June 1. Greg Rake, currently living in Quito, Ecuador, will assume responsibilities for joint Latin American oversight for the two Mennonite mission agencies, the Commission on Overseas Mission and the Mennonite Board of Missions.

- **Pastor transitions:**
Gerald Peachey was installed as pastor at Barrville Mennonite Church, Reedsville, Pa., on April 21.

- **Coming events:**
'Invoking the Voice,' Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., May 9-12. First annual poetry weekend features Julia Kasdorf, Jeff Gundy, Raylene Hinz-Penner, and Scott Holland as resource persons. More information from 800 839-1021.
20th anniversary of South Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church, Calgary, Alta., May 18-19. John Toews of Regent College is the guest speaker. More information from Brenda Dyck at 403 274-4403.
Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., June 16-23. "Bach and Mendelssohn, Part II" features open rehearsals, three major concerts, noon chamber music concerts, and children's activities. More information from 540 432-4367.

- **New books:**
A Plea for Purity: Sex, Marriage, and God, by J. Christopher Arnold, responds to modern views on love and marriage. Provides biblical insights into issues including the sacredness of marriage and overcoming sexual temptation. Available from Plough Publishing House, 800 521-8011.

- **Job openings:**
Admissions counselor, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include representing the college among prospective students and their parents. Qualifications include writing and speaking skills, willingness to travel, bachelor's degree, and commitment to Goshen College's mission. Position opens July 1. Application deadline is May 24. Send letter of application, résumé, and three references to Marty Lehman, director of admissions, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.
Conference minister, Conference of Mennonites in Alberta and the Northwest Mennonite Conference. Full-time position is shared between the conferences. Qualifications include ordination in the Mennonite-Anabaptist tradition and ability to relate to and represent participants in the two conferences. Position opens Sept. 1. Application deadline is June 30. Contact Jim Miller at 403 337-2020.
Director, La Casa de Maria y Marta, a service and learning center in San Antonio, Tex. Responsibilities include setting up and working with short-term service groups, maintenance of facilities, fundraising, and administration. Spanish language ability preferred. Housing provided. Position opens Jan. 1. Contact John Lichty at 210 534-2064.
Director of alumni relations, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School. Send letter of interest and résumé to principal Elaine A. Moyer, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446.
Director of business affairs, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pa. Qualifications include experience with business office functions, computer operations, and personnel supervision. Send letter of interest and résumé to principal Elaine A. Moyer, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446.
Science Center technician/chemical hygiene officer, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Three-quarters-time position for ten months. Responsibilities include maintaining equipment and inventories, assisting in technical operations of science instrumentation and numerous projects, and implementing and updating a chemical hygiene plan. Bachelor's degree in a laboratory science required. Application deadline is May 31. Contact the EMU human resources office at 540 432-4108.
Teaching positions, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pa. Openings for biology instructor and Spanish instructor. Send letter of interest and résumé to principal Elaine A. Moyer, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446.
Youth minister, Northwest Mennonite Conference and Conference of Mennonites in Alberta. Three-quarter-time position begins Oct. 1. Qualifications include experience or training in youth-related ministry from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective and openness to commissioning, licensing, or ordination. Deadline for applications is July 31. More information from Jim Miller at 403 337-2020.

Revive us again. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Young Ethiopian men pray during a worship service. "Much of the momentum for the church-planting movement within Meserete Kristos [Mennonite] Church is carried by young people," says David W. Shenk, director of overseas ministries for Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM). Shenk met with leaders of the Mennonite church in Ethiopia during a recent visit to East Africa.

"Not since the 16th century have Mennonites experienced an ingathering such as is happening in Ethiopia today," Shenk says. The church has experienced 150 percent growth in the past five years—about 50,000 baptisms. Total membership stands at about 83,380 people.

Shenk says a renewal movement among Ethiopian Mennonites began thirty years ago when high school students began praying for revival. "Those prayer meetings were the spark that ignited the 'prairie fire' of renewal and evangelism that has gripped the [Mennonite church] for the past thirty years."—*Jewel Showalter*

NEW MEMBERS

Albuquerque, N.M.: Nancy Hostetler.
Aurora, Ohio: Randy Yoder, Nancy Shaver, Joe Ritten-

house, Pam Rittenhouse, and John Staples.

Breslau, Ont.: Joanne Kipfer, Reynold Kipfer, Mike Strathdee, Carolyn Strathdee, Fred Lehmann, and Erin Boyle.

Doylestown, Pa.: Bryan Landes, David Landis, Erin Landis, Sarah Landis, Molly Moyer, and Ben Tyson.

Finland, Pennsburg, Pa.: Tobias T. Moyer and Forrest Moyer.

First, Kitchener, Ont.: John Reimer, Hector Aviles, Joaquin Bonilla, and Anabel Cabrero.

Lee Heights, Cleveland, Ohio: Yvonne Hicks, Shri Myricks, and Martha Walton.

Lombard, Ill.: Charles Shank, Ned Richer, and Dorothy Mast Richer.

North Leo, Leo, Ind.: Sherah-Leigh Zehr.

Pine Grove, Stryker, Ohio: Krista Shue and Kelly Borton.

Pittsburgh, Pa.: Tim Boehm, Terri Brandt, and Ronald Collins.

Salem, Ore.: Beth Julian.

Sonnenberg, Kidron, Ohio: Ryan Shetler, Laura Taylor, and Denae Eshleman.

South Hutchinson, Kan.: Jason Graber, Danielle Owens, Jason Pitzer, Clayton Peirce, Shannon Smith, and Taci Goff.

Stahl, Johnstown, Pa.: Sally Ann Reddecliff.

Steinmann, Baden, Ont.: Jen Dunford, Sean East, Mark Gingerich, Amanda Iutzi, Laura Iutzi, Andrew Koch, Suzanne Koch, Chris Lebold, Robert McLean, Marilyn Roth, Kevin Schumm, Michael Steinmann, and Jason Wagler.

Sugar Creek, Wayland, Iowa: Kathie Grimm, Mat Leighty, Maria Roth, and Mike Roth.

BIRTHS

Alderfer, Lois Waybill and Steve, Faber, Va., Andrew Nelson (third child), March 6.

Aurandt, Tracie Selders and Tim, Johnstown, Pa., Marla Elizabeth (fourth child), Feb. 28.

Beck, Joy Franks and Randy, Pettisville, Ohio, Gabriela Joy (third child), born Nov. 13, 1990, adopted Nov. 14, 1995.

Blank, Glenda Deiter and William, Atglen, Pa., Emily Rebecca (first child), Feb. 27.

BreMiller, Donna Hostetler and Aaron, Salem, Ore., Abigail Rose (first child), March 25.

Byler, Jayne Speigle and Michael, Barberton, Ohio, Justin Michael (third child), Feb. 29.

Derstine, Judy Moyer and G. Edward, Turbotville, Pa., Uriah Edward (second child), March 15.

Eby, Kristin Leaman and L. Alan, Harrisonburg, Va., Alyssa Dara (second child), March 16.

Fox, Kimberly Turrill and Jonathan, Scottdale, Pa., Lydia Ellen O'Donnell (second child), March 24.

Frey, Valerie Linstrum and David, Kitchener, Ont., Julia Isabella (second child), March 20.

Gonzalez, Marguerite Kenagy and Stefan, Salem, Ore., Karina Kenagy (second child), April 11.

Graber, Lela Faye Yoder and Rodney, Charlottesville, Va., Liesl Mae (second child), March 14.

Hellinga, Miriam and Richard, Kitchener, Ont., Julian Charles (third child), March 29.

Hershberger, Kim and Dean, Hutchinson, Kan., Travis Lane (fourth child), March 7.

Heusinkveld, Gail Wilson and David, Wakarusa, Ind., Molly Ryah (third child), born Jan. 5, adopted April 1996.

Hoover, Loreen Mininger and Glenn, Hatfield, Pa., Eric Joseph (third child), April 15.

Lapp, Wanda King and Doug, Cochranville, Pa., Elizabeth Mae (second child), March 1.

Roth, Wanda Beiler and Jeff, Napoleon, Ohio, Kathryn Elizabeth (third child), Oct. 29, 1995.

Sacra, Julie Lehman and David, Harrisonburg, Va., Emily Joy (third child), April 1.

Smith, Tonya Steffen and Jim, Apple Creek, Ohio, Collin James (second child), April 8.

Sorrells, Vikki and Mark, Cleveland, Ohio, Kamal Pruitte (first child), April 8.

Spencer, Renee Collins and Bradford, Burlington, N.C., John Myth (first child), April 1.

Stevenson, Colleen Albrecht and Robert, Burlington, Ont., Tristan Charles (second child), April 6.

MARRIAGES

Crum-VanPelt: Scott Crum, North Lima, Ohio (Lutheran), and Brenda VanPelt, Columbiana, Ohio (Midway), March 23, by Robert Brigham and Larry Rohrer.

Hershberger-Kuhns: Marc Hershberger, Salem, Ohio (Midway), and Jennifer Kuhns, Kidron, Ohio (Sonnenberg), April 6, by Dennis R. Kuhns (father of the bride) and Larry Rohrer.

DEATHS

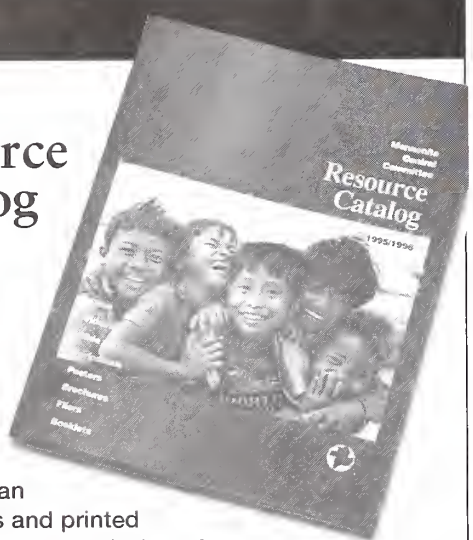
Beitzel, Krista R., 11, Grantsville, Md. Born: June 29, 1984, El Dorado, Ark., to Willis and Greta Guengerich Beitzel. Died: April 11, 1996, Grantsville, Md., of a brain tumor. Survivors—brother: Wendell. Funeral and burial: April 14, Springs Mennonite Church, by Owen Guengerich and Lawrence Brunk.

Bender, Anna Evelyn, 89, Springs, Pa. Born: Jan. 22, 1907, Springs, Pa., to John H. and Lydia Miller Bender. Died: April 4, 1996, Grantsville, Md. Survivors—sister: Marie B. Haning. Funeral: April 8, Springs Mennonite Church, by Earl Yoder. Burial: Springs Cemetery.

Cressman, Clayton S., 72, Elmira, Ont. Born: Aug. 26, 1923, Kitchener, Ont., to Isaiah and Magdalena Shirk Cressman. Died: April 8, 1996, Elmira, Ont. Survivors—children: Garfield, Gwen Huot, Ralph; brothers and sisters: Harold, Clifford, Una, Vera Weaver, Mabel, Olive High, Edith Woolner; 10 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Pauline Fretz Cressman (wife). Funeral: April 11, First Mennonite Church, by Rudy Baergen. Burial: Berea Mennonite Cemetery.

Esbenshade, Clay, 91, Neffsville, Pa. Born: Oct. 17, 1904, Lancaster, Pa., to Martin G. and Katherine Zeamer Esbenshade. Died: March 6, 1996, Grantham, Pa. Survivors—children: Rhoda E. Killheffer, J. Harold, H. Glenn, Carl E., Kenneth L.; sister: Elizabeth Diem; 15 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ruth E. Yocum Esbenshade (wife). Funeral and burial: March 9, Landis Valley Mennonite Church, by Thomas A. Horst and Levi J. Ziegler.

MCC Resource Catalog



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(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381

Helmuth, Alvin, 90, Kidron, Ohio. Born: July 27, 1905, Berlin, Ohio, to Gideon and Barbara Beechy Helmuth. Died: April 10, 1996. Survivors—children: Barbara Witmer, Carol, David, William, Dale, James; sisters: Naomi Neuenschwander, Wilma Roth, Mary Zehr, Orpha Miller; 19 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elsie Sommers Helmuth (wife). Funeral and burial: April 13, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, by Dennis R. Kuhns.

Hofstetter, Harold S., 85, Petersburg, Ont. Born: May 9, 1910, Kitchener, Ont., to Walter and Phoebe Snyder Hofstetter. Died: April 5, 1996, Kitchener, Ont. Survivors—wife: Melinda Gingerich Hofstetter; children: Ken, Nyle, Laurene Ferguson; brothers and sisters: Harry, John, Layton, Reed, Ruby Ament, Jean Ross; 10 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral and burial: April 9, Steinmann Mennonite Church, by Scott Brubaker-Zehr and Mahlon Gerber.

Kauffman, Elsie Eleanor Heinrichs, 73, Fairmont, Neb. Born: May 11, 1922, Carleton, Neb., to Fred and Anna Hopkins Heinrichs. Died: April 12, 1996, Concordia, Kan. Survivors—children: Linda Bridges, Arlys Hubert, Ardeth Rhodes; 6 grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren, 2 stepgreat-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Floyd Kauffman (husband) and Gary (son). Funeral and burial: April 16, Salem Mennonite Church, by Wilton Detweiler.

Killius, Dora Edith, 85, Grantsville, Md. Born: Dec. 22, 1910, Bittinger, Md., to Milton E. and Ellen E. Arnold Wiley. Died: April 15, 1996, Cumberland, Md. Survivors—children: Wilma Kipp, Woneda Kenney; sisters: Viola Miller, Hilda Bowser; 4 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: William H. Killius (husband). Funeral: April 11, Springs Mennonite Church, by Paul Bender, Lawrence Brunk, and Lee Williams. Burial: Springs Cemetery.

Koehn, Kenneth Eugene, 51, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Sept. 8, 1944, Torrence, Calif., to Galen and Martha Wiens Koehn. Died: April 11, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Diana Macaulay Koehn; sons: Daniel, Timothy; brothers and sister: Roy, Larry, Wendy Jones. Congregational membership: Bethel College Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 16, Park View Mennonite Church, by Shirley Yoder Brubaker, Ed Stoltzfus, and Shirlee K. Yoder. Cremated.

Leichty, Herman, 83, Grabill, Ind. Born: July 14, 1912, Allen County, Ind. Died: April 6, 1996, Grabill, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Martha Dix Leichty; children: David, Kathleen Spiering; brothers and sisters: Paul, Raymond, Bertha Miller, Velma Hostetler, Violet Perry, Lucille King; 2 grandchildren. Funeral: April 9, North Leo Mennonite Church, by Doug Zehr and Charles DeSanto. Burial: Leo Memorial Cemetery.

Martin, Catherine Virginia, 63, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: May 24, 1932, Rockingham County, Va., to Ammi R. and Vada Catherine Wenger Martin. Died: March 24, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—sister: Reba Martin Nesselrodt. Funeral and burial: March 27, Weavers Mennonite Church, by Joseph C. Shenk, Edith N. Shenk, Glendon Blosser, and Larry Nesselrodt.

Miller, Elmer, 67, Phoenix, Ariz. Born: Feb. 16, 1929, Hutchinson, Kan., to Daniel D. and Amanda Stutzman Miller. Died: March 4, 1996, Phoenix, Ariz., of a bacterial infection of the blood. Survivors—wife: Miriam "Mim" Boyer Miller; children: Marilyn Henderson, Arthur, Sandra Meisinger, Lisa Decker; brothers: Lloyd, Leroy; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: March 8, Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, by Dennis Stauffer. Cremated.

Mullett, Henry, 76, Nappanee, Ind. Born: July 31, 1919, Morocco, Ind., to Joni and Millie Miller Mullett. Died: Feb. 24, 1996, Sarasota, Fla. Survivors—wife: Esther Miller Mullett; sons: Kenneth R., Paul E., Eugene D.; 8 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Mark L. (son). Funeral: Feb. 28, North Main Street Mennonite Church, by Ken Bontreger and Homer Miller. Burial: Hepton Union Cemetery.

Shantz, Hilda, 94, Cambridge, Ont. Born: Feb. 18, 1902, Mannheim, Ont., to Enoch and Annie Gremm Horst. Died: March 5, 1996, Cambridge, Ont. Survivors—children: Elmer, Miriam Green, Kenneth; brother: Lorne Horst; 7 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lloyd Shantz (husband). Congregational membership: Wanner Mennonite Church. Funeral: March 8, Fairview Mennonite Centre, by Eric Hiebert Rempel. Burial: Hagey Cemetery.

Snyder, Emma, 93, Cambridge, Ont. Born: May 12, 1902, Waterloo Twp., Ont., to Absolam and Mary Groff Snyder. Died: Nov. 18, 1995, Cambridge, Ont. Funeral and burial: Nov. 21, Wanner Mennonite Church, by Eric Hiebert Rempel.

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Commissioned by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, this beautiful four-color fraktur commemorates the birth of Menno Simons 500 years ago. Accomplished fraktur artist Roma J. Ruth, Harleysville, Pa., has created this memento featuring Menno's life and ministry. The text was chosen by John L. Ruth, historian, writer, filmmaker and storyteller.

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THE LAST WORD

A case for laryngitis

Let me say / and not mourn: the world / lives in the death of speech / and sings there.
—Wendell Berry, *The Silence*

I lost my voice for two days this winter. My vocal cords strained, cracked, and thrummed their way to virtual silence, and I was reduced to smiles and gestures and an occasional squeak.

The forced silence of laryngitis is in no way pleasant. But I sometimes wonder what an epidemic of it would do for us in the Mennonite Church. What would happen if we all lost our voices? Or, more realistically, what would happen if each of us would admit that our voices aren't the only ones the church needs to hear? In a time when some in the Mennonite Church are ready to leave because theologies seem too dissonant and lifestyles too incompatible, a case of institutional laryngitis may be just what we need.

Silence strips us of the eloquent but false selves we create with our churched and many-syllabled vocabularies. Jesus must have known this dangerous arrogance of words when he spent his forty days of desert silence. He was simply quiet during this time—converting no one, healing and feeding no one, proclaiming nothing. Nothing.

This "nothing" of silence is threatening for us who are accustomed to fast-paced conversations, racing television advertisements, and sputtering radio announcers. Our churchwide conversations aren't much different. We jostle to be heard as quickly as we can and by as many people as possible. Often we come with valuable agenda and worthy causes, and we trumpet them with admirable conviction and powerhouse language.

But for people who have lost their voices in the church—whether because they've been silenced by someone, because they consider themselves not eloquent or educated enough, or because they believe something that runs against our corporate grain—the space created by choosing silence could help us hear the whispers we'd never hear over our own yelling.

Losing our voices would mean admitting that we're tired of trying to make others in the church understand us and that we're just as tired of trying to understand them. This very honesty may help us, though, to hear the God who talks to us in the "death of speech."

The Friends could show us the way. Members of this historic peace church meet weekly in a silence flecked only with short reflections from individuals. When people do share, they most often speak slowly, quietly, and with eyes to the ground. Sometimes entire meetings occur without anyone saying anything (until a time of fellowship afterwards)—and those services of "nothing" are not rated unproductive or a waste of time.

The silences in our Mennonite worship services are often token pauses squeezed into an out-loud prayer from the pulpit, a couple of seconds filled with uncomfortable squirming in the pews. What if we would have 15 minutes of silence some morning? Or half an hour? Could we challenge ourselves to a Sunday morning service of total silence?

There would be the logistical questions, of course—screaming children, time constraints, and baffled visitors. Also, expecting one hour of silence to soothe festering tempers and resolve our disagreements is unrealistic and probably undesirable. Conversation should continue alongside the silence, in separate space and time.

But what we learn from corporate times of silence in worship could possibly seep into our business meetings and conference sessions. Silence won't directly help us balance budgets or pass conference resolutions, but it may lead us to a God who works far beyond our constructed world of words.

The time may still come when theologies clash beyond repair. We in the church may still shuffle away from each other and wave from a distance.

But if we are just quiet together, we could stumble onto ground far away from that battlefield where words are used for weapons. Maybe we'll stop trying to fix, convince, or deny and will rather just *look* at each other. For once, maybe we'll be speechless.

Maybe we'll meet in a field where the language of our God rains down upon our silence.—*vsw*

May 14, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY
MAY 15 '96
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If we want to be faithful, Spirit-led congregations, we must reach out to new persons and receive them as children of God. These new persons will call us to new expressions of faith which broaden how we see God's grace. We also need to be aware that not everyone grows at the same speed or in the same direction.

Conflict can be God's call for spiritual growth

It is important that we keep this belief as we talk together. We must trust God's Spirit to guide us in discovering new expressions of faithfulness for our day.

by Don Blosser

Ever wish we could recover the spirituality of the New Testament church? The book of Acts describes a rapidly-growing church in which people were being saved—people who didn't share the same culture or faith history but who had met God. These new believers brought along a few personal practices which were hard for the more traditional people of the faith to accept. So the church called a meeting. They prayed, talked, and found that the Holy Spirit had a solution to the problem. So they rejoiced, wrote down this solution, shared it with all the churches, and everybody was happy.

Not really! The story is not quite that simple. The faith community of the New Testament was going through amazing transitions—changes in the social makeup of the membership, in the things they believed, and in which practices to accept.

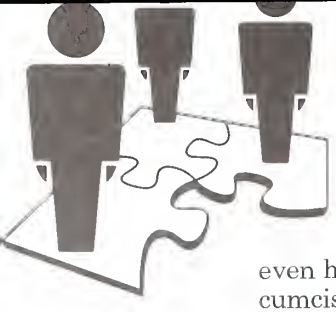
I can just hear some persons telling the disciples at Pentecost: "You be careful with this Holy Spirit stuff because if we go in this direction, in 30 years we will have people in church who don't speak Hebrew, we will have women who want to cut their hair, and we will have Roman soldiers. Just you watch—we'll

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Carmen Schrock-Hurst:
Some things God alone can see 6

Conference and mission leaders consider integrated structure 9

'Acceptable level of risk' highlights MCC discussions 11



In times of conflict, our prayers should be process prayers. These ask God to help us create a community in which God's voice can be heard and truth be found.

even have Gentiles who don't want to be circumcised! Are you sure you want to do that to the church?"

Whenever I hear someone say they are praying that the Mennonite Church might somehow recover the spirituality of the New Testament church, I feel like asking: "Do you really want to pastor a church which fights over how the congregation ought to be organized, over who is really spiritual, over how members of the church should handle their own money, whether to include persons of other social and ethnic backgrounds, what to do about racial prejudice, whether to engage in missions or just share the gospel with our own relatives, how to serve communion, what is appropriate dress for women in worship, what is permissible to use in worship?" All this was going on in the New Testament church as believers tried to sort out doctrinal and theological details.

The story of the early church tells us that, if we want to avoid conflict, we need to find a way to keep people out. But if we want to be faithful, Spirit-led congregations, we must reach out to new persons and receive them as children of God. These new persons call us to new expressions of faith which broaden how we see God's grace. We also need to be aware that not everyone grows at the same speed or even in the same direction.

So what do we do when a congregation has to face differing understandings of faith? What do we do when members feel strongly about these different understandings? The Acts 15 story can help us.

The conference described in this chapter was led by the Spirit to a helpful conclusion—but the process of the Spirit's leading is also worth noting. The problem was that circumcision was mandatory for salvation; this was a strong statement everybody was expected to believe. But not everyone did.

It is easy for us to look back on the discussion and think that this was a pretty simple problem. We all know where God stands on this question, so why the big fuss? Yet ever since Moses, this was the way it had been; every Jewish male for more than 1,200 years had been circumcised, so many wondered why others were even talking about it.

The group gathered to discuss the relationship of salvation and circumcision, and the text says they had "much debate." They did not agree, but they did let other people talk. Luke says that when Paul and Barnabas reported what God was doing among the Gentiles, the whole assembly kept silence. Why does Luke say that? During the debate time when people were talking, other people did not keep silent. Once in a while the debate spilled over into heated arguments. But when Paul and Barnabas reported on the activity of God, people listened. That was not just politeness; it suggests that they heard this as the activity of God.

When we get into conflict, we often fight over secondary issues. In Acts, circumcision was the presenting issue, but it wasn't the real issue. The real issue was salvation and the nature of the church. Who can be saved, and who can be a member? When they talked about salvation, the issue of circumcision was resolved in the process.

What did the more conservative Jerusalem people want? They were worried about salvation. Can the Gentiles—people who are not like us—be saved? Peter answered with a powerful statement about what God was actually doing. Peter separated salvation from a human ethical response to salvation, i.e, circumcision. Then Paul and Barnabas followed with a report that, in fact, Gentiles were accepting Jesus, and God was saving them.

The church that is growing spiritually will have conflict and face difficult issues. When that happens, we need to be clear on what the issue really is. Is it: "Can Gentiles be saved?" Or is it: "Do saved people have to be circumcised?" Or: "Will the church be ruined by these uncircumcised people that we are afraid are immoral?"

This sounds like a modern dilemma facing the church today. In some areas soldiers are asking to be accepted as members in the congregation, and this has led to conflict. Perhaps we are confusing "Who can be saved?" with "What is appropriate behavior for saved people?" with "Can a congregation still preach and teach about peace if it has a soldier as a member?" (Note: these questions may be expressions of legitimate parental fear about the attraction of the military for young people in our culture.)

Another way of putting this is: what is the maturity level which we expect before we permit persons to be part of our congregations? The church in Acts agreed that Gentiles can be saved and should be accepted without having to be circumcised. But they also asked these Gentiles to be sensitive to specific behaviors which were troublesome for Jewish people,

even though they were ethical practices and not explicitly salvation events (food offered to idols, sexual morality, and certain kosher eating habits).

Can we get behind the current emotional problem to talk about the issue that really is of concern to us? This removes the issue from personalities and allows us to discover that we may have some common beliefs behind our different ethical responses.

Finally, do we honestly believe that God has a solution for the issues which divide us? We usually say, "Yes I believe that, and God has told me what the right solution is." When I say that, other people respond with their "godly solution," and now we have added another level to the conflict. If I believe my solution is godly and you don't agree, then you must not be a very godly person!

It is hard for people to believe that there is a way to grow through a conflict that we face, but it is important that we keep that belief as we talk together. Can we trust God's Spirit to guide us in discovering new expressions of faithfulness for our own day? It is helpful to note that of the things asked of Gentiles in Acts, we who are Gentiles today observe only one of them. We have forgotten the rest, and we don't feel one bit guilty about it—nor should we.

That suggests something else which is important in how we approach conflict. One of the issues which often causes tension in the church is how we define faithfulness to God. Some see it as "keeping up with what God is doing"—moving on, accepting new ideas, reshaping the faith. Others see faithfulness as "retaining the faith"—holding fast to what God has done in history, being faithful to what was taught by the church for generations. Thus we set the stage for conflict in the church over what appropriate faith and behavior should be.

Are there ways to solve this? Perhaps there is when we see that behind each of these positions there is a common theme: a concern for faith. If we can accept the truth that we all care deeply about faith, then we will not be so quick to condemn each other. Rather, we will work together to be faithful even within our differences.

We must pray. We usually pray that God will reveal the truth to us and give us the answer. That is a content prayer. The problem is that when we pray content prayers, we usually have a pretty good idea what the answer is, so we are really praying at other people and hoping they will see God answer on this issue. In times of conflict we need to pray process prayers which ask God to help us create a community in which God's voice can be heard and God's truth can be found.

We need to listen. If we believe that God is active in our lives, then we need to hear the testimony of other persons God has brought to faith. I need to recognize that God is greater than my perceptions of what God is doing, and I need others to keep encouraging me to see new things without rejecting God's activity in history.

We must talk. Real talking means sharing, not shouting. We must share our experience of faith and our vision for faith so that it can be tested by the gathered community. Therefore, how we talk can be important. Since Pentecost the prophetic word is to be shared, but the content of that sharing is to be tested and discussed by the gathered community, because we believe deeply that God is present with us as we gather to discuss, pray, and decide.

Some of us who are more quickly verbal may need to be admonished to be silent so that the still, small voices of the more quiet, nonassertive members may also be heard.

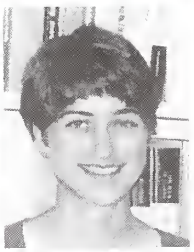
We have not always responded well to conflict in our faith history. We have sometimes silenced creative voices by intimidation, expelling them, or ignoring them in order to keep peace in the congregation. God may be calling us to a new way which recognizes conflict as an opportunity for new growth and a challenge to discover new truth (or to reaffirm and reteach traditional truth).

We need not be afraid but rather trust God to be present with us. As we listen to each other, we can dare to believe that in these tense situations, God is calling us to a new level of spiritual insight which will deepen our faith, broaden our horizons, and strengthen our communities.

Don Blosser is chair of the Bible, religion, and philosophy department at Goshen (Ind.) College. He pastored for 17 years in Illinois and Pennsylvania. Blosser is a member of College Mennonite Church and is married to Carolyn Brooks.

"Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like . . . an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. . . . Now [God] commands all people everywhere to repent."—Acts 17:29-30a

Gospel Herald



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READERS SAY

The Mar. 12 issue of *Gospel Herald* contained a "Mennoscope" item about nearly 75 people "celebrating" the closing of former Mennonite Board of Missions property at 1711 Prairie Street in Elkhart, Ind.

Forces of change are inevitable. Some changes are painful to adjust to. I feel grateful for the work and vision in world missions this MBM property once symbolized. Before and after World War II, dedicated missionaries were prayed for and commissioned by the Mennonite church to go into all the world and preach the gospel, establishing Christian churches in the Anabaptist tradition of following Christ according to the Scriptures.

Today it appears that preaching the gospel to the lost and saving people from eternal separation from Christ has shifted to promoting various kinds of services. There's much publicity to "peace and justice in the world," "engaging the powers," and the "Peace Factory." These help people rise from poverty to a better standard of living.

But when will the gospel be preached to people who are without Christ? In *Global Consultation on World Evangelism,* Ralph D. Winter notes that there are 10,000 people groups in our world without the gospel. The call to witness for salvation in Christ is as great today as it was at the time that called Christ to leave the presence of the Father and give his life for the lost.

Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. That is still his mission in our world before he returns. He carries out his mission through people who have been given a deep burden for the lost, to proclaim eternal life through the blood on the cross. "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Lee H. Kanagy
Belleville, Pa.

I would have felt better if Ryan Ahlgrim would have stopped with principle 14 in ***17 Principles to Help Us Interpret the Bible*** (Mar. 19). For in principles 15 and 16, it seems that the way we interpret the Bible is dependent upon the "fuller" revelation of the faith community.

To say that "the present meaning of individual passages always goes beyond the meaning intended by the original authors" seems quite presumptuous. Why do our experiences and circumstances affect the way we interpret God's Word?

And to say there is "no simple or final meaning to any biblical passage" gets very close to relativism. Not only does the Bible give us principles, but it also gives us absolutes that stand the test of time because they are true.

Principle 16 says that "reason, experience, and the tradition of the faith community are also sources of authority and truth." What makes them authorities that can be placed at a near equal level with the Bible? We need to test all things in light of Scripture, not in light of our reason and experience or tradition.

There's another problem in principle 17. It says that "the faith community should also listen to the interpretations of those outside the church because the boundaries of God's kingdom are surprising and unknown." I hope those boundaries are not unknown. And are we going to rely on "outsiders" to help us interpret the Word of God? I hope not. This opens us to any and all winds of doctrine, and the Bible itself holds little authority in reality.

Steve Bauer
Goshen, Ind.

As I read ***Making the Penultimate Too Important Often Leads to Violence*** (Apr. 23), I found myself cringing at Ted Grimsrud's disregard for portions of the biblical record. I agree with his bottom line—giving priority to things other than God often leads to violence. But some of what he wrote about Solomon is either incorrect or incomplete.

It is true Solomon was not David's legal heir, but he was the son God chose as heir to the throne (1 Chron. 22:8-10; 29:1). Adonijah was the human choice according to the traditions of the time. But since when does God follow human tradition?

Solomon did execute Adonijah for his traitorous acts against God's plan for the nation. But he executed Joab, not because he was Adonijah's ally, but as a result of David's instructions to him (1 Kings 2:5-6). He did send Abiathar into exile, but according to 1 Kings 2:27 this fulfilled the word the Lord had spoken about the house of Eli. It appears to have been God's will and plan. The article also attributes things to Solomon that were not to his

credit. He did not centralize the social structures nor institute rigorous taxation. David before him had already accomplished this through his forty-year reign as king. David and King Saul also drafted soldiers and hired career military leaders. Solomon did not "institute a policy of forced labor." That was practiced by all of Israel's leaders clear back to the time of Joshua (Josh. 9).

The article also quotes 1 Kings 8:13 to support the concept that Solomon built the temple "to contain God." But this is taken out of context for in the same speech Solomon says, "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27).

The article also gives one the overall impression that God was not pleased with the building of the temple nor Solomon's leadership. Both are untrue. 1 Kings 8:10-11 tells of the dedication service for the temple where God's glory "filled his temple." If God did not agree with building of the temple, why would God fill the temple with glory?

God's support of Solomon is expressed in 1 Chron. 29:25: "The Lord highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel and bestowed on him royal splendor such as no king over Israel ever had before."

The article also implies that Solomon's motives for building the temple were to strengthen his political power, to control religious practices, and to influence Israel's economics. These may have been direct outcomes of building the temple, but I believe the biblical record tells us that the motives of this "young and inexperienced" Solomon (1 Chron. 29:1) were to simply carry out the desires and plans of his father, David, who wanted to build the temple but was told he could not.

I reiterate: I agree with Grimsrud's bottom line—giving priority to things other than God often leads to violence. But I believe he used the wrong text to illustrate his point.

Gary Blosser
Wauseon, Ohio

I was glad to read the letter by the 75 ministers (Apr. 9) who "experienced God's presence in brokenness, repentance, confession, reconciliation, and celebration." God is pleased with such action.

I would have revised several of their statements to follow the above themes in this way:

As members of the Mennonite church, we repent:

- of our pride of programs;
- of our denominationalism and our pride of history;
- of our theological compromise.

I would also have revised their last sentence to read: "As a Mennonite church, we would do well to embrace and affirm what God is doing through us."

I rejoice as I read in *Gospel Herald* of God's work among us in bringing people to Christ. Let us keep our eyes upon Jesus, listen to the Holy Spirit, and lift up and carry each other.

Carl L. Smeltzer
Spartansburg, Pa.

After working late last night, I read *Gospel Herald* to relax (bet that's something you don't do to relax). This morning I woke with one of those "aha" connections—or at least an interesting idea.

I was recently diagnosed with Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD). Some of the reading I've been doing on the subject reminded me of the anonymous letter from the "sexual addict" (Apr. 23).

In the book *Driven to Distraction* (Simon & Schuster, 1994), the authors describe a 39-year-old married man who considered himself a "sexual addict" because he constantly sought out liaisons with women and felt himself incapable of resisting any sort of sexual temptation. In reviewing his history, it was discovered that he had had problems with distractibility and impulse control all along. He was a victim of ADD.

Many people with ADD find that certain forms of highly stimulating behavior help them to focus. Some turn to gambling, others to high-risk activities such as skydiving or driving at high speeds. Romance does the same thing for other people.

Perhaps the author of the letter in your Apr. 23 issue is one of these. I at least have found it very helpful to view my past 40 plus years through the ADD lens.

Name withheld by request

Is there room for sinners among the saints?

Thank you to Mark Wenger for this article (Apr. 16). No lightning I've seen sizzles more profoundly than his enormous sentence: "God decisively invaded this world through Jesus Christ: not to make humans more successful and respectable, but because God loved us and wanted to save us from ourselves."

What a marvelous reflection to guide our thoughts and voices!

Hans Wenger
Lancaster, Pa.

My only question was with the illustration. Part of the article seems to be about being open to people who seem different from us. The photo you chose to illustrate that does not challenge me to make room for a street-smart tigress or others.

Merrill Krabill
N. Newton, Kan.

This article has been very helpful to me in my struggles where my Mennonite Christian beliefs have led to exclusion rather than inclusion.

What is the formula for being both inclusive and yet confronting sin? Our church stopped talking about that when we became inclusive. I'm supposing that the acceptance Wenger is talking about needs to have continued grace in order to keep from falling again.

Ron Sider's comments in the same issue about governments were also stimulating. I would pray for the day when I, with the rest of my fellow Christians, apply his defining role of political balance in regards to all moral values, especially as they demonstrate the failure of the synagogue and the church.

Luke Drescher
Harrisonburg, Va.

Mark Wenger has expressed so clearly my condition and my goal. Jesus came to save sinners, and I'm the chief one.

Your editorial in the same issue, ***Nobody's Telling* Me *What to Do!*** is so needed today.

I don't always agree with everything in *Gospel Herald*. But I value the interchange of thoughts and ideas as we all try to be faithful to God and the Word.

Stanley Weaver
Phoenix, Ariz.

How my God met me (7):

Some things God alone can see

Where was God on this journey? Walking right along with us, of course. But that didn't become clear in a rapid flash. It was affirmed in slow and gentle ways.

by Carmen Schrock-Hurst

I remember the most painful times of my life as times in which I became aware of a spiritual reality much larger than myself, a reality that allowed me to live the pain with hope.—Henri Nouwen, Here and Now

In the summer and fall of 1993, I walked through the valley of the shadow of potential blindness. I was just turning 35, and my children were just about five and three. One year earlier my husband Luke and I had uprooted our family and moved from a co-pastorate in Virginia to Elkhart, Ind., where we were both studying at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Now, suddenly, the future of my eyesight was in question, and I found myself in a pit of depression.

Why would God have led us to move to Indiana to study if I couldn't read? How would I ever raise these children safely without sight? How could I explain to other people the absolute terror in my heart at the thought of not being able to see? These and other questions kept me awake at night and pensive by day. Where was God in this valley of darkness anyway? I knew that if the faith I preached and studied meant anything at all, it needed to sustain me; but I wasn't sure that it would.

My journey with pigmentary glaucoma had actually started in the summer of 1989 when, during a routine eye exam, I was told there was something suspicious about the nerve in my left eye. Downplaying the possibility of anything serious, I set up an appointment with a specialist. Tests confirmed that I did have a rare type of glaucoma.

After a couple of years of taking medication, a visual field exam in 1993 revealed that I had only 4 percent of the optic nerve remaining in my left eye and had already lost three-fourths of the field of vision. My "good" eye was not much better off, with only 15 percent of that nerve left undamaged.

In mid-June of 1993 I had surgery on my left eye; the following day I had a laser procedure on my right eye. Many people helped with driving, childcare, and meals. I felt surrounded by love and upheld by prayers, and I felt confident that the worst was behind us.

But although my left eye healed well, my right eye had not responded to the laser treatment, and tests showed I was still losing vision in what I affectionately called my "good" eye. The doctor scheduled surgery for the following week. My future sight hung by a slender thread on the health of this eye; in operating to save what sight I had, there was a risk of losing more.

On the drive back to Elkhart from Indianapolis after the tests, I started down the slippery slopes of bewilderment and anger. Why did I have to face another round of surgery? How would we tell the children? How could we ask our friends and church for more help? How were we going to pay for this?

How well I remember sitting in the driver's seat of the car and crying on the day before the surgery. I didn't know if I would ever drive again. I also remember the disappointment of going to the registrar's office at the seminary and dropping my classes. I knew that my weak eye would not be able to handle the reading required for seminary classes while my good eye was recovering. Suddenly the fall loomed long and desolate.

I started praying for five years of sight—enough, I thought, at least to get my children out of the stage where my watchful eyes had to keep them from drinking Clorox or darting in front of cars in the street.

The week of surgery we were once again surrounded by incredibly supportive family and friends. But life was far from normal. I wasn't allowed to drive or to lift anything over five pounds. While I was far from blind, I could only see out of one-third of one eye, and it took quite awhile for my depth perception to make adjustments. I remember the time I glibly tried to dump chocolate powder into a glass of milk for my son; it landed in a heap neatly beside the glass rather than inside. And I remember my husband silently recycling dishes out of the drying rack and back into the water to be rewashed because of the dirt I hadn't seen.

On my better days, these incidents were funny, and we tried to treat them lightly. But underneath it all I kept thinking, "How would I do this if I were blind?" Since I was unable to complete many of the tasks I wanted to do, I

The author at a favorite place, her porch swing, with her family (from left): Carmen, Lucas, Luke, and Grace Schrock-Hurst.

fought daily with the inner battle, "What good am I if I can't produce or accomplish something today?"

And where was God in this journey? Walking right along with us, of course, but that didn't become clear in a rapid flash of insight as I had hoped. Rather, God's comforting presence was affirmed in slow ways, in gentle reassurances that broke through to me almost as slowly and imperceptibly as my sight returned. In fact, God's presence in our lives during the season of recovery is probably clearer looking back than it was at the time.

In the early stages of the surgeries, we had meaningful times of anointing and prayer for healing at the seminary and at our church, Fellowship of Hope. At church the pastor handed out rainbow-colored ribbons for people to wear or carry as reminders to pray for my sight and that I might continue to see all the colors of the rainbow. At the same time, many in our congregation were also carrying rocks in our pockets as reminders to pray for Frank Sohar, a 46-year-old member of our church who had five children and was fighting cancer. As God would have it, our house was directly across the street from the Sohars. Whenever I went in or out our front door or sat in the porch swing, I felt called to pray for Frank. It was good for me to think beyond my own little world and to be reminded that mine was not a life or death battle as was Frank's.

As God slowly worked with me that fall, I took as a motto the phrase, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). I began to learn that there is more than one way to see, just as there is more than one kind of blindness. Although I was still terrified of physically going completely blind, I started to pray that my inner eyes would be opened. I wanted to know what it meant to walk by faith and not merely by sight.

One of the things I began to see more clearly was myself. As an eldest child, I had developed into the typical high achiever—a somewhat driven, perfectionistic person who always liked to be in control, on time, and well-prepared for whatever I was asked to do. Although an overseas assignment in Latin America and parenting two preschoolers had begun to knock some of those controlling edges off me, it seemed that the lessons of the eye surgeries were variations on the same theme. If I could not see well enough to drive, I needed other people. I did not like to depend on other people. I wanted to be self-sufficient. I also discovered that I far preferred being the one to take meals to other people than the one to receive them. I wanted to be in control, not indebted.

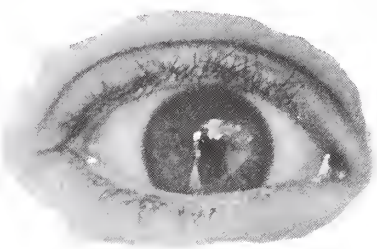
As God peeled off the layers of unhealthy assumptions and control needs, I found underneath the glaring reality that I continued to find it hard to accept God's unconditional love. I had spent most of my life trying to earn God's love and approval. Now I had to face the question of how I would earn God's love as a blind person. Could I accept that God's love for me had nothing to do with whether or not I finished a seminary degree, was a "good enough" mother, or contributed to the local and global church? Could I accept that God's love for me would sustain me no matter what the future brought? Could I believe that God loved me whether or not I was healed in the physical

When we face an overwhelming gulf of grief or pain, uncertainty or fear, God will teach us either to fly or to row. We will not drown. We will not be left alone.

sense that we so much longed and prayed for?

During this time when reading was difficult, God frequently spoke to me through music. I was astounded, Sunday after Sunday, by how many of our hymns speak of sight and vision and light. Many times I would find myself weeping through a hymn whose words and tune would then sustain me through the week.

Another way that God spoke to me was through creating mental pictures. When the chasm from seeing to blindness seemed too deep, when the future looked completely uncertain, I often found myself visualizing water. I was on one side of a large body of water and needed to get to the other side, but I could not do it alone. In fact, I could not do it at all. It was then that a traditional folk song gave me a helpful image. "The water is wide, I can't cross o'er, give me a hand, or wings to fly. Give me a boat that can carry two, and both shall row, my love and I." I substituted "my Lord and I" for the last phrase, and I found comfort in the image that God would either teach me to fly over that water or row in a boat with me. The gulf from sight to blindness could somehow be bridged—whether it was now or in five or ten or twenty years. I would not need to row alone.



In early January 1994, Luke and I once again made the familiar trip to Indianapolis for a three-month postoperative checkup. This time the news was good; the pressure in both eyes was low and my right eye had recovered well from surgery. With a new lens prescription, I would soon be seeing 20/40 out of my left eye and 20/30 in my right eye. I could drive and study and parent without fear—for now at least. We were elated and ready for life to get back to normal.

One week later our lives were shattered again by the unexpected death of Luke's mother. A month later, our friend and neighbor lost his battle with cancer. In these two deaths—one sudden, one anticipated but fought against—I found myself again face-to-face with the reality of pain and suffering. It became clear that the lessons I was learning from my own journey were lessons I would need for the rest of my life as I walked with others through their valleys of losses and death.

When we first returned from Indianapolis with the good news about my eyesight, I threw an "I can see clearly now" party, complete with playing pin-the-tail-on-the-eye chart. Now more than two years later, I am reminded of what it is that I can see clearly. I see that all of life is a great gift, and that what I see and how long I see are miracles. I see that I am responsible for how I use my sight. I must choose well what I read and view and do with my days of sight. I see that none of us, even middle-class North Americans, can be sure of anything about our futures. Car wrecks and cancer, unemployment and addictions, glaucoma and depression are all a part of the cycle of this earthly life, and neither my family or friends are immune to any of these.

But our faith enables us to say that in the midst of pain and uncertainty we have great hope, for death is not the last word. Blindness, if and when it comes, will not be permanent. We worship a God of justice and compassion who walks with us in healing and hope. We await the coming of a new heaven and new earth, where sorrow and mourning and blindness will be no more. When we face an overwhelming gulf of grief or pain, uncertainty or fear, God is with us. We will either be taught to fly or taught to row, but we will not drown, and we will not be left alone.

The *Hymnal: A Worship Book* includes a song that gives me hope—"In the Bulb There Is a Flower" by Natalie Sleeth. It speaks of waiting for the unseen, believing that God will fulfill the promises that God has made. We can see clearly some of that fulfillment now, with our own eyes and in ways that we can understand like spring. But most of the promises fulfilled will come in ways that "God alone can see."

I pray that I will continue to learn more of what it means to walk by faith and not by sight—learning, as Nouwen writes, to live the pain with hope and trusting to God the things that I cannot see or understand. For some things, God alone can see.

Carmen Schrock-Hurst and her husband, Luke, are the parents of Grace (7) and Lucas (5). They are members of Fellowship of Hope Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind. Carmen graduates from AMBS with a master's of arts degree in theology this month and will give birth to their third child any day.

Conference and mission leaders consider new integrated mission structure

Coraopolis, Pa. (MBM)—As they looked to the future mission efforts of an integrated Mennonite denomination, about 40 Mennonite Church conference and mission leaders envisioned greater integration on another front.

Rather than one mission hierarchy that would single-handedly regulate global mission efforts, they saw church agencies becoming a network of centers that would facilitate local churches and regional groups to do mission and service.

That vision became clear at the recent consultation of conference and mission leaders convened by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) here. The consultation arose from a proposed reorganization of MBM's board of directors stemming from the Cana Venture survey of the church and the coming integration of the Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite churches.

Executives and mission leaders from 16 conferences envisioned a churchwide mission structure that responds to local mission initiatives in a myriad of locations in North America and around the world. Four North American mission centers would offer resources in places of historic Mennonite concentration such as Elkhart, Ind.; Newton, Kan.; Salunga, Pa.; and Winnipeg, Ont.

Participants encouraged leaders of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church to consider "the immediate appointment of a joint task force to develop proposals for integrated mission structure based on a model with regional mission centers with strong relationships to local districts and conferences coordinated by a North American council."

"That coordinating structure can't be the pope, but it has to be something dynamic," said Joseph C. Shenk, assistant moderator of Virginia Mennonite Conference.

New understandings. They told the two denominations to "move ahead as quickly as possible." "We are working at some new approaches and new understandings of what it means to be in mission," said John Eby, chair of the MBM board.

Ideas for new structures came quickly from conference executive and mission leaders in brainstorming sessions. Instead of "possibly once viewing MBM as the engine of mission, now we are viewing the church as the engine and MBM as oil that assists and keeps things running smoothly," said Roy Walls, a mission coordinator from New York Conference.

"We are moving intentionally in a direction where it is Franconia's mission in Mexico City or Iowa-Nebraska's mission in Ecuador that we [at MBM] are a part of—so it is local mission interest that is heard and cultivated," said MBM president Stanley Green.

Partnership inseparable from mission. Partnership—a practice in which national mission agencies and local congregations, clusters, or conferences cooperate in the work of mission—was cited repeatedly as an inseparable part of mission.

Two decades ago, congregations gave 30 percent of their resources to churchwide agencies. Today, they give 10 percent to those sources. In light of this fact, participants explored the most effective shape of mission partnerships.

Although the discussion focused on structure, participants realized their ultimate goal was for the structures to provide support for ministry.

"Denominational structures are clay jars," said Philip Bergey, Franconia Conference coordinator. "We cannot focus on the structures alone. Our focus must be on Jesus Christ and on ways those kind of structures will give life to that hope."—*Tom Price*

Military officers denounce land mines. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—A young land mine victim tries on a new artificial leg with the help of a staff member of the Wat Than rehabilitation center in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Up to 110 million active mines are scattered in 64 countries, causing 2,000 deaths or injuries per month.

The April 3, 1996, *New York Times* carried a prominent advertisement signed by 15 retired military officers commending President Clinton for his goal of eventually eliminating antipersonnel land mines. Six retired generals—including former joint chiefs of staff chairman David Jones and Desert Storm commander Norman Schwarzkopf—seven lieutenant generals, a vice admiral, and a brigadier general wrote, "We view such a ban as not only humane, but also militarily responsible. The rationale for opposing antipersonnel land mines is that they are in a category similar to poison gas; they are hard to control and often have unintended harmful consequences."

Unfortunately, comments Titus Peachey, coordinator of MCC U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries, the land mines these military staff talk about in the open letter do not include cluster bombs. "We feel the distinctions between land mines and other kinds of antipersonnel weapons such as cluster bombs are becoming increasingly blurred," Peachey says. "Cluster bombs are also very indiscriminate. And since they don't always explode on impact as designed, they act very much like land mines. So the same reasons leading us to ban land mines should also lead us to ban cluster bombs." Despite the omission of cluster bombs, Peachey says, "It's gratifying to see so many retired military people of high rank speak forthrightly about the continuing tragedy caused by land mines."—*Emily Will*

Ghana Mennonite outreach into Togo leads to Anabaptist-related churches

Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) staff writer Tom Price recently traveled to Togo as part of a 17-day trip to Africa. This is the third in a series about Mennonites in West Africa.—Editor

Lomé, Togo (MBM)—Contacts between the evangelist of the Ghana Mennonite Church and a Pentecostal pastor in a neighboring West African nation have led to the beginning of Mennonite-related congregations in Togo.

Near this seaside city of 420,000 people, Leopold Sossou Houmey, who is seeking ties with the Ghana Mennonite Church, has begun two congregations since leaving an independent Pentecostal denomination. In addition, Houmey has started a cell group which meets for Bible study on the outskirts of Lomé.

ANABAPTISTS IN WEST AFRICA

Togo is a long and narrow country that reaches 360 miles from its Atlantic shore to its interior border. Only 31 miles wide at the coast, it reaches 100 miles in width at its broadest point. The former French colony is located between Ghana and Benin, two countries with long-standing presence of MBM workers.

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Christians account for about 35 percent of the Togolese population, which largely subscribes to the traditional West-African animist beliefs. More than 20 Christian denominations and about 30 ethnic groups now exist in Togo.

Although Houmey is from the Mina ethnic group, he has long worked to plant churches on both sides of the Ghana-Togo border among the Ewe, Togo's predominant ethnic group who migrated from Nigeria centuries ago. The Ewe people, who have dominated the cultural life in Togo and extend west into Ghana, are predominantly Christian and well-educated.

In his work in the Lower Volta region of Ghana, Houmey attended a Mennonite-related prayer camp where he met Michael Badasu, evangelist for the Ghana Mennonite Church.

"They are just at the beginning of this relationship. They have considerable contact with each other, though," says Steve Wiebe-Johnson, MBM worker in Cotonou, Benin, who visited Lomé with Badasu on a recent trip.

Badasu has worked with the Ghana Mennonite Church since 1972 when he was a local leader in the Adansi, where he was instrumental in starting four congregations. After being educated at Ghana Christian College and serving as a pastor in the Lower Volta area, Badasu renewed his church planting efforts and has been involved in starting at least four other congregations.

Houmey met Badasu at a prayer camp in Dabala Junction, where a former practitioner of magic now leads an emerging Christian group that has applied to join the Ghana Mennonite Church.

"Badasu talked with me about working together in Togo," says Houmey, who was interested in establishing ties between his independent congregations and a mainstream Christian group.

Houmey said he was among a number of pastors who left the independent Pentecostal denomination because they felt they could no longer work with its founder, who took a hierarchical approach to the church and departed from an understanding of God primarily rooted in the Bible rather than special revelation.

"I am alone in this particular work. The other ones who left are doing their own thing," says Houmey, who calls his work the Ministry of the Assembly of the Faithful.

The congregations started by Houmey are located in Kossi-Agbaui and Amedehoeve, two villages about 10 miles from Lomé where they now are the only Christian presence. The cell group is in a more populated area, the Lomi suburban neighborhood of Kagome.

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The growing involvement of Houmey's congregations with Badasu of the Ghana Mennonite Church will link the Togolese Christians with a long history.

A Mennonite presence began in Ghana in 1956, when George Thompson, a Ghanaian who had become acquainted with Mennonites, was commissioned to begin a Mennonite church. With support from MBM, four missionaries worked with Thompson to develop a church.

At its peak, the Ghana Mennonite Church had about 1,500 members in 17 congregations. Today, about a dozen congregations remain in the Ghana Mennonite Church, which had 800 members in 1986. Much of MBM's work in Ghana focuses on some of the 3,500 registered independent churches in Ghana.—*Tom Price*

Leopold Sossou Houmey (right), church planter in Lomé, Togo, talks with Mennonite Board of Missions worker James Krabill. Houmey has had contact with a Mennonite evangelist from Ghana and is interested in Anabaptism.

And multitudes . . . *Lancaster, Pa. (LMH)*—After months of practice, over 500 students from 13 Mennonite high schools came together from Canada, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. to sing sacred music together. The event was the 34th Mennonite Secondary Education Council (MSEC) Choir Festival, held April 12-14 at Lancaster Mennonite High School.

Guest conductor for this year's festival was Jeffrey Riehl, assistant professor at the University of Richmond. "I came away being very impressed by what's going on in the Mennonite schools and by the great tradition of choral singing which seems to still be alive," Riehl said. The music for the combined choir ranged from the Zulu folk song "Jabula Jesu" to Rachmaninoff's "Bogoroditse."

Visiting schools included Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, United Mennonite Educational Institute, Western Mennonite High School, Freeman Academy, Academia Menonita, Sarasota Christian School, Iowa Mennonite School, Bethany Christian High School, Central Christian High School, Eastern Mennonite High School, Belleville Mennonite High School, and Christopher Dock Mennonite High School.—*Fern Clemmer*

Fifty hours of prayer frame seminary anniversary

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—A 50-hour prayer vigil framed the April 26-28 weekend celebration of the 50-year history of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS).

With the theme, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven," the services which opened and closed the prayer vigil called worshipers to pray for God's kingdom around the world. Fifty candles represented the 50 hours of prayer and 50 years of AMBS history.

Peter Wiebe, pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz., was the keynote speaker at a Saturday evening banquet. He called the seminary and the church to a closer relationship, saying, "Friendships between the seminary and church must be cultivated with fervor; here is where the strength of our denomination lies for the future."

Alumni and former faculty and staff attending the event came from across the U.S. and Canada. More than 20 congregations in the Indiana-Michigan Conference and the Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church commemorated the event on Sunday morning by inviting students and faculty to speak.

The weekend was the first event of a yearlong emphasis at AMBS on its 50-year history. Through the year AMBS plans to recognize the histories of all three institutions which it comprises: Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Goshen College Biblical Seminary, and AMBS. AMBS began with cooperative efforts between the two seminaries in 1958 and became incorporated as one seminary in 1993.

The theme of the entire 50th anniversary commemoration at AMBS is "Foundations for the Future."—*Mary Klassen*

'Acceptable level of risk' highlights MCC talks

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—"I've been shot at, ridiculed, and terrorized," Bonnie Bergey told the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) executive committee during its April 19-20 meeting here.

Bergey organized MCC's aid and peace efforts during Somalia's civil war and famine. She shared "moments of terror" as she encountered trucks mounted with machine guns, experienced the death of friends, and made hard decisions about which refugees to assist.

Drawing the line. "What is an acceptable level of risk? Where do we draw the line at exposing workers to risk?" asked committee member Dave Cressman. The board reiterated that MCC will continue to place workers in settings of violence and reviewed the guidelines to be followed. These include consulting with local partners, appointing workers who possess adequate spiritual resources, and giving administrative support.

How increasing crime affects workers was the topic of a recent meeting at MCC's headquarters. Administrators concluded workers face a new level of vulnerability and pondered how MCC can support them.

Over the past year in Africa, three MCC houses were burglarized by armed men, 12 workers were held up, and five vehicles stolen, some at gunpoint.

"Although the majority of MCC workers never have this kind of experience, it does represent a growing trend created in part by the increasing gap between the economically rich and poor," says Jim Shenk, MCC Africa co-secretary. "It raises the question—to what extent should we hire security services and build higher walls?"

'Living lightly.' MCC workers are expected to "lessen temptation by reducing our material standard of living." And MCC recommends that workers "live lightly with the possessions we do have, being willing to give them up rather than defend them." Still, the dilemma of security precautions remains.

MCC in Africa is considering appointing MCCers in various locations who can be called upon to "de-brief" workers within 72 hours of a traumatic experience. Shenk said MCC should not underestimate the long-term effect of trauma. "These experiences can jump up five, even 10 years later. MCC and local congregations must remain supportive."—*Pearl Sensenig*

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Cheese factory makes way to Siberian town

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—This year Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is shipping a first—an entire cheese factory.

A disassembled cheese factory, plus boiler, is now making its way across the ocean from Corfu, N.Y., to Neudachino in Siberia, Russia. With its arrival and assembly, townspeople in Neudachino will be able to make cheese from the milk produced by their 800 Holsteins.

The project has its origins in MCC's placement of Ben and Erna Falk in Siberia in January 1993. Leaders of the town of Neudachino, with some 700 people, many of ethnic Mennonite background, had asked for workers to help develop village businesses.

Village administrators came up with the idea for the cheese factory as a more efficient way of using the 10 tons of milk village cows produce daily. Cheese can be held until transportation is available to get it to market; milk cannot.

'Galvanized to action.' After returning to Canada in 1995, the Falks received a call from Neudachino leader Andre Enns. "The village can't survive without some help," Enns told the couple.

"The call galvanized us to action," says Ben. Within weeks and with the help of a New York businessman, they had worked out a rough plan for assembling a basic cheese-making operation.

A boiler contractor retubed and repaired a boiler and adapted it for liquid propane instead of natural gas, and MCC Europe purchased a used butter churn and cream separator.

Finishing what they began. Meanwhile, the Falks left for Russia. "People in Neudachino couldn't believe we had actually returned," recounts Erna. "They thought we'd not be able to make it back to help finish what we began."

Some villagers didn't believe the project would really come to pass, she adds. But even the skeptics were convinced when the butter churn and cream separator arrived from Europe on April 10. The next day Ben and village men poured a concrete floor in a former childcare center, now to become a cheese factory. And on April 25, the U.S. equipment—from huge boiler down to individual cheese hoops—left the Baltimore port destined for Hamburg, Germany. From there it will be trucked to Neudachino.

—Emily Will

- **Body found.** The body of Alicia Showalter Reynolds was found on May 7 about 15 miles from where she was last seen. A 1992 graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, Reynolds, 25, had been missing since March 2 when she was abducted near Culpeper, Va. She was a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md. A memorial service was held on May 12 at Parkview Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

- **500 S. Main property sells.** The home of three Mennonite Church agencies and Greencroft, Inc., in Elkhart, Ind., sold for $962,500 on May 1. A South Bend, Ind., motel owner and landlord bought the property. The three Mennonite agencies—the boards of congregational ministries, missions, and education—plan to remain as tenants. The partnership of agencies sold two parking lots in addition to the building.

- **Grant awarded.** The Institute for Conflict Studies and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University has received a $300,000 grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts for a series of summer courses. The three-year grant will support the Summer Peacebuilding Institute, which is related to EMU's graduate program. The grant covers the expenses for up to 12 people from outside North America to attend the summer course and the development and testing of courses and support staff time.

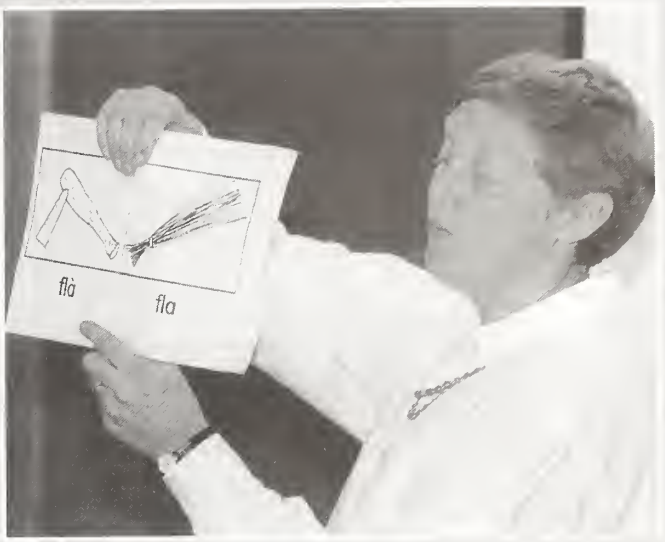
- **Winners announced.** Mennonite Health Services recently awarded six $1,000 Elmer Ediger Memorial Scholarships for the 1996-97 to people in the fields of mental health, counseling, or developmental disabilities. They are: Cheryl Smith of Altadena, Calif.; Amy Yutzy Harder of Harrisonburg, Va.; Pearl Heppner of Fresno, Calif.; Jeanine Janzen of Fresno; Scott Neufeld-Wall of North Newton, Kan.; and Herman Stahl of Fresno.

- **Employees honored.** Two Eastern Mennonite University employees who retire this spring and one who is beginning another assignment were honored at a recognition dinner on April 30. They are: David F. Miller, development and advancement, 19 years, and Vira Hershberger, food service, 26 years. Also cited was Lee Snyder, vice president and academic dean for 12 years, who begins as president of Bluffton (Ohio) College this summer.

- **Mexican Mennonites gather.** The first-ever national meeting of the Union of Anabaptist Mennonite Churches in Mexico (IAMUM) was held in Mexico City April 8-14. Fifty people representing six regional conferences participated, some travelling 1,200 miles to attend. IAMUM was formed in 1993 in response to a new law that requires all Protestant churches to be legally registered with the Mexican government.—*General Conference Mennonite Church*

- **MMA offers support for wills.** Mennonite Mutual Aid is offering a new fraternal benefit that will help pay the costs of writing a new personal will or updating an old will. "A Will for Every Home" will reimburse church members or attenders half their legal fees up to $75. According to MMA president Howard Brenneman, about four of every 10 church members do not currently have valid wills. The program is not restricted to MMA members.

- **New building dedicated.** Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church dedicated a new building on April 14. It is the fourth known facility used by the congregation since it was founded in 1721. The building includes a 375-seat sanctuary, 20 classrooms, health and wholeness center, and nursery school. The congregation sold the previous meetinghouse but retained ownership of the cemetery and a log house built around 1740.



Reading in Burkina Faso. Donna Kampen Entz displays linguistic materials developed for the tribal language of a Burkina Faso village where she and her family have lived for the last eight years. In a recent visit to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Entz demonstrated that mission work includes the very basic effort of learning a new language. The primary goal Entz says, is to "build relationships of trust and respect at the village level and have God's message grow out of these relationships."

Entz and her husband, Lorne, has been workers with Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church for 20 years.—*Mary E. Klassen*

- **New appointments:**

John E. Toews, president of Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont.

- **Pastor transitions:**

A. Don Augsburger ended a pastorate at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church on March 31. He began as director of pastoral care at the Mennonite Home, Lancaster, Pa.

Janice Kennel Ropp was licensed and installed as minister of counseling at Christ Community Mennonite Church, Schaumburg, Ill., on April 14.

Cynthia Massanari Breeze was licensed as minister of worship and Christian education at First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana (Ill.), on April 28.

- **Coming events:**

Commencement, Hesston (Kan.) College, May 19. Myron Augsburger will speak on "Extending the Vision."

Commencement, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., May 24. Jonathan Larson will give the commencement address.

Shalom connections conference, Reba Place Fellowship, Evanston, Ill., Oct. 11-13. Adults from 40 communities will share about experiences with conflict and healing at "Reconciliation in Christian Community." Contact David Janzen at 847 475-8715.

- **New books:**

Eunice—She Loved Life, by Don Mast, is the story of a woman facing breast cancer. Includes journal entries interspersed with sections written by her husband. Available from Masthof Press, 610 286-0258.

Ezekiel is a part of the believers church Bible commentary series. Written by Millard C. Lind, the book centers on the prophet's message about God's presence, covenant, victorious rule, concern for the nations, and cleansing for worship and obedience. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

Peace Was in Their Hearts, by Richard C. Anderson, presents reflections of a thousand conscientious objectors who served in Civilian Public Service during World War II. The draftees tell of their frustrations, introspection, and dialogue as they honed their beliefs about war, peace, and human community. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

- **New resources:**

Generation Why Bible Studies, "How the Bible Came to Be" by David Schroeder and "Keeping the Garden: A Faith Response to God's Creation" by Tim and Donita Wiebe-

Neufeld, are now available from Faith & Life Press at 800 743-2484.

Mennonites in Canada Media Guide is now available. First published in 1990, the guide has been updated and new chapters have been added. The purpose of the guide is to help the media report accurately about Mennonites in Canada. Available for $5 from the MCC Canada Resource Library, 134 Plaza Dr., Winnipeg, Man. R3T 5K9.

Outreach cards are now available from Mennonite Board of Missions Media Ministries. The oversized postcards are suitable for congregational mailing or personal invitation. More information from 800 999-3534.

The White Rim of Heaven is a new compact disc of music by Brian Gingrich, a graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College. Available from 800 292-6932.

• **Job openings:**

Administrative assistant, YES, VS, and STAT program staffs, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa. Qualifications include word processing experience. Immediate opening. Contact Keith Blank at 717 898-2251.

Administrative assistant, Beth-Haven Terrace, Hannibal, Mo. Responsibilities include maintaining office and managing tenant rental accounts for 102 independent-living senior apartments affiliated with Cornerstone Mennonite Church of Hannibal. Starts end of July. Submit résumé and salary history with cover letter to the chief operating officer, Beth-Haven Terrace, 901 Central Ave., Hannibal, MO 63401.

Assistant director, Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center. Begins September 1996. Responsibilities include editing a newsletter, designing publicity and training materials, and coordinating workshops. More information and applications available from 708 627-5310.

English teacher, Academia Menonita Betania, Aibonito, Puerto Rico. Volunteer position for fifth through tenth grades. More information available from 787 857-3513 or send résumé to principal Lora Miranda, PO Box 2007, Aibonito, P.R. 00705.

Houseparents/directors, Beth Shalom, Lancaster, Pa. Responsibilities include supervising residential program for teen mothers, monitoring the spiritual and life skills components of program, and managing a five-unit apartment building. Begins Aug. 15. More information from Sylvia Nafziger Charles at 717 299-0460.

Science and math teachers, Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite School. Full-time and part-time position in junior high classes available. Contact principal David L. Sauder at 717 738-4266.

English teacher, Belleville (Pa.) Mennonite School. Full-time position in grades 8-12. More information and application available from principal Matt McMullen at 717 935-2184.

Social studies teacher, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. Begins August 1996. Contact Joyce Thomas at 717 299-0436.

NEW MEMBERS

Barrville, Reedsville, Pa.: Gerald and Susan Peachey.

First, Reedley, Calif.: Keith Wall and Irene Del Cid.

Glennon Heights, Lakewood, Colo.: Evan and Grace Roth and Rose Weaver.

Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: Michell Deavers, Maynard and Mary Ann Gibson, Earl and Phyllis Sommers, Tim and Laura Stoner, Kim King, and Kyle and Tracey Weirich.

Lindale, Edom, Va.: Jason Miller, Michael Swartley, Welby Lehman, and Karen Eaton.

Plato, LaGrange, Ind.: Mary Franke and Courtney Franke.

Sharon, Plain City, Ohio: Douglas and Susan Alt, Mark Bailey, Richard and Enola Miller, Gwen Troyer, Roxanne Walk, Philip Whitley, and Sarah Yoder.

Shore, Shipshewana, Ind.: Megan Berkey, Leona Bontrager, Nicole Bontreger, Todd Bontreger, Cecilia Lambright, Jill Miller, Cari Roush, and Sarah Wenger.

Walnut Creek, Ohio: Angela Engstrom, Janet Gerber, David Hostettler, Melissa Chewning, Jason Mishler, Joel Schlabach, Kimberly Slabach, David Engstrom, Doran Gerber, Lois Hostettler, Stacy Schneider, and Penny Sommers.

Zion Hill, Singers Glen, Va.: Alvin and Tonna Brubaker, Marian Crawford, Agnes Grogg, and Sterril and Vivian Simmons.

BIRTHS

Barrett, Jill and Wayne, Newport News, Va., Jessie Olivia (second child), April 8.

Bast, Connie Siegrist and Jason, Watertown, N.Y., Tyler Dean (first child), May 22.

Bender, Pattie Richards and Tony, Kitchener, Ont., Allison Jayne (second child), April 11.

Drake, Stacey Elliott and Eric, Marshallville, Ohio, Mason Wayne (second child), March 6.

Dunlap, Lisa Beachy and Dennis, Daniel Alan (fourth child), March 25.

Harder, Dawn Schierling and Kevin, Denver, Colo., (twins) Darren and Travis (first and second children), April 18.

Hunt, Barbara Miller and Robert, Newport News, Va., Tyler David (third child), April 19.

Jackman, Tara Hackett and John, Smithville, Ohio, Evan Logan (first child), March 11.

Keeler, Judy Chelton and Chad, Corry, Pa., Kyra Ann (first child), April 18.

Martin, Marjorie Hooley and Dale, Greentown, Ind., Cambry Allison (fourth child), April 23.

Miller, Joyce Moyer and Mark, Baltimore, Md., Aaron Robert (second child), April 11.

Smith, Angie Horn and Tim, Orrville, Ohio, Chandler Christian (third child), April 8.

Wald, Karen Troyer and Larry, Dalton, Ohio, Leah Christine (second child), born Jan. 31, received for adoption Feb. 5.

Williams, Roxanne Caldwell and Calvin, Chelsey Lynn (second child), Jan. 26.

Yakobson, Laurie and Rob, Lakewood, Colo., Jaysen Sean Thomas (fifth child), Feb. 24.

Yoder, Linda Horner and Brian, Hollsopple, Pa., Rebecca Lynn (first child), April 24.

MARRIAGES

Birtwistle-Hearne: Drew Birtwistle, Toronto, Ont., and Kelly Hearne, Toronto, Ont. (Erb Street), April 19, by Renee Sauder.

Guckes-Shotts: Barry Guckes (Kingview), and Claire Shotts, Scottdale, Pa. (Kingview), April 20, by Linford Martin.

Kandel-Kurtz: Richard Kandel, Millersburg, Ohio, and Rebecca Kurtz, Smithville, Ohio (Oak Grove), March 23, by James Schrag and Norma Duerksen.

Miller-Reimer: Melissa Miller, Urbana, Ill. (Wesleyan Methodist), and Paul Reimer, Urbana, Ill. (Oak Grove), Feb. 3.

DEATHS

Amstutz, Benjamin U., 86, Kidron, Ohio. Born: Jan. 12, 1910, Dalton, Ohio, to Amos and Fannie Zuercher Amstutz. Died: April 17, 1996, Kidron, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Anna Sommer Amstutz; children: Doris North, Shirley Toole, Ken, Gloria Nussbaum; stepchildren: Don Sommer, Carol Yoder, Ann Troyer; brother and sisters: Evan, Evelyn Nussbaum, Sylvia Martin, Mildred Nussbaum, Edith Schrock; 22 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Irene Sommer Amstutz (first wife). Funeral and burial: April 20, Kidron Mennonite Church, by Herman Myers and Wayne North.

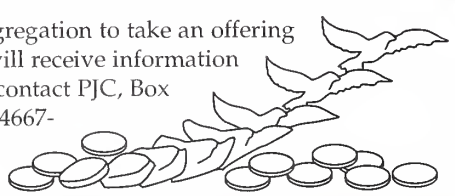
Baer, Sara Jane Kraft, 87, Maugansville, Md. Born: May 12, 1908, East Berlin, Pa., to

Peace needs change!

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares. . ." —Micah 4:3

Our call from God is to change violence to peace. The Peace and Justice Committee of the Mennonite Church helps your congregation in this vital work, but we need your support.

We invite your congregation to take an offering for peace. Pastors will receive information in April MEMO or contact PJC, Box 173, Orrville, OH, 44667-0173; phone/fax 330-683-6844.



George D. and Lilly Ann May Kraft. Died: March 24, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa. Survivors—children: Stuart K., H. Edalene Hess, L. Jason, Evangeline M. Osborne, Mary Ellen Clark, Phyllis A. Brady; 12 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Norman H. Baer (husband). Funeral and burial: March 27, Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, by Rob Cahill and Nelson L. Martin.

Breneman, Mabel Martin, 99, Orrville, Ohio. Born: Sept. 11, 1896, Dalton, Ohio, to George and Amanda Mary Kreider Martin. Died: April 12, 1996, Orrville, Ohio. Survivors—sons: George, Jr., Edwin; sister: Clara Boegli; 7 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: George Breneman, Sr. (husband) and June Thomas (daughter). Funeral and burial: April 16, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, by James Schrag and Norma Duerksen.

Fahndrich, Luella E. Bender, 61, Salem, Ore. Born: Dec. 13, 1934, Ryley, Alta., to Mahlon and Christina King Bender. Died: March 24, 1996, Salem, Ore. Survivors—husband: Richard Fahndrich; sons: Dave, Dan, Ben, Steve, Tim; brothers: Harold and Maurice Bender; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: March 27, Western Mennonite Church, by Dave Stutzman. Burial: Restlawn Memorial Gardens.

Hartzler, Tura M., 80, Belleville, Pa. Born: Feb. 28, 1916, Belleville, Pa., to Samuel D. and Libbie B. Yoder Hartzler. Died: April 19, 1996, Belleville, Pa. Survivor—sister: Lena Byler. Funeral and burial: April 21, Locust Grove Mennonite Church, by Max Zook and Erie Renno.

Jackman, Evan Logan, one day, Smithville, Ohio. Born: March 11, 1996, Smithville, Ohio, to John and Tara Hackett Jackman. Died: March 11, 1996, Smithville, Ohio. Funeral and burial: March 14, East Chippewa Church of the Brethren, by James Schrag and Norma Duerksen.

Kauffman, Edward Lee, 86, Baden, N.D. Born: April 6, 1910, Kenmare, N.D. Died: April 17, 1996, Glendale, Ariz. Survivors—wife: Margaret Kauffman; children: Rebecca Purvis, Mary Hershberger, Paul, Willis; 7 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Congregational membership: Trinity Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 20, Best Funeral Services Chapel, by Peter B. Wiebe. Private burial.

Lederman, David, 89, Mendon, Mich. Born: Aug. 19, 1906, Grabill, Ind., to Daniel and Katherine Newhouser Lederman. Died: April 14, 1996, Mendon, Mich. Survivors—children: Betty Andersohn, Miriam Vincent, Paul E., Bill, Bob; brother and sisters: Glenn, Amanda Rupp, Evaland Smucker; 16 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ruby Haarer Lederman (wife). Funeral: April 20, Locust Grove Mennonite Church, by Dean Brubaker and Jay Ulrich. Burial: Shore Cemetery.

Martin, Fred Eugene, 80, Edmonton, Alta. Born: Sept. 29, 1915, Marion, Pa., to Sam and Olive Barkdoll Martin. Died: April 18, 1996, Edmonton, Alta., of a stroke. Survivors—wife: Mary Voegtlin Martin; children: Fred, Glen, Lawrence, Carol Watamaniuk, Luella MacMillan; brothers and sisters: Joe, John, Sam, Jim, Paul, Richard, Ethal, Ruth Reber; 11 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Evangeline Watamaniuk (daughter). Congregational membership: Duchess Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 21, Holyrood Mennonite Church, by Ray Landis. Burial: Salem Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Miller, Ruth Shank, 87, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Sept. 23, 1908, Broadway, Va., to Joseph and Emma Showalter Shank. Died: April 15, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—husband: Willis Miller; children: Cheryl Miller Heatwole, Marjorie Miller Presley, Mervyl, Winfred; 14 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Joseph Robert Miller (son). Funeral and burial: April 18, Lindale Mennonite Church, by Loren Horst and Howard Miller.

Reist, Hilda F. Gahler, 87, Salem, Ore. Born: March 10, 1909, Needy, Ore., to John and Freda Ziegler Gahler. Died: March 20, 1996, Salem, Ore. Survivors—daughters: Eileen Weaver, Shirley Chupp, Sharon Kennel; brother and sisters: Vernon Gahler, Clara Gingerich, Dorothy Miller, Bertha Kenagy; 8 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Reuben Reist (husband). Funeral: March 25, Western Mennonite Church, by Dave Stutzman. Burial: Hopewell Cemetery.

Rempel, Elda Dorothy, 70, Montezuma, Kan. Born: 1926, Kansas. Died: April 19, 1996, Glendale, Ariz., of pneumonia. Survivors—husband: Henry Rempel; children: Calvin, Nathan, Victoria Marrs; brothers and sisters: Leland, Milton, and Earl Johnson, Edna Issac, Anna Lee Smith; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: April 23, Trinity Mennonite Church, by Peter B. Wiebe. Private burial.

Snider, Eva Mae Weber, 85, Cambridge, Ont. Born: May 25, 1910, Waterloo, Ont., to Noah S. and Ellen Stauffer Weber. Died: April 21, 1996, Cambridge, Ont. Survivors—children: Madeline Kufske, Eleanor, David; 8 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Angus A. Snider (husband) and Elgin (son). Funeral and burial: April 23, Erb Street Mennonite Church, by Renee Sauder and Doug Snyder.

Sommer, Viola Speicher, 98, Smithville, Ohio. Born: Feb. 11, 1898, Smithville, Ohio, to John H. and Amanda Jane Smiley Speicher. Died: March 8, 1996, Reedley, Calif. Survivors—children: Robert, Georgia Linschied; 4 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: David Sommer (husband). Funeral and burial: March 15, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, by James Schrag and Norma Duerksen.

Wenger, Cheryl J. Witmer, 42, Columbiana, Ohio. Born: April 6, 1953, Salem, Ohio, to Warren and Lucille Detwiler Witmer. Died: March 31, 1996, Columbiana, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—husband: Dale Wenger; children: Ann, Christopher, Samuel, Charity; brothers and sisters: Dennis and Gerald Witmer, Joyce Nafziger, Marlene Wilhelm. Funeral and burial: April 7, Midway Mennonite Church, by Larry Rohrer, Ernest Martin, and Dean Hammond.

YES teams leave. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Eight Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams left the United States in April for service assignments in Romania, Wales, Trinidad, Philippines, Barbados/Grenada, Harrisburg, Pa., and Lebanon, Pa. The teams spent the past three months in preparation for their service assignments. The program is sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions. Participants who trained at the Harrisburg YES center are:

Front row (left to right): Lorena Maust to Trinidad; Susan Melvin to Rhondda Valley, Wales; Sigrid Jordan to Trinidad; Darrel Weaver to Trinidad; Regina Massey to Trinidad.

Middle row: Marelin Camal to Lebanon, Pa.; Phillip Weldy to Trinidad; Gail Gingerich to Wales; Abby Ewert to Harrisburg, Pa.; Jessica Shuman to Lebanon, Pa.; Melinda Martin to Wales; Jamie Walls to Wales; (Voluntary Service participants are Rhonda Sauder to Boston, Mass., and Ken Noll to Camp Deerpark, N.Y.).

Third row: Rosanne Frey to Wales; Mike Martin to Lebanon, Pa.; Mike Gingerich to Wales; Jerry Ewert to Harrisburg, Pa.; Loren Wengerd to Wales.

Newspaper

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Me, myself, and I

It's not often I spent most of several days back-to-back watching TV. But a recent bout with one of the nastiest colds I can remember had me doing just that. I didn't feel like reading. One can only sleep so much—even when sick. So I spent at least three days with remote control in hand.

What an experience! I became fascinated—not with the programs, most of which were incredibly boring. What kept me surfing were the ads.

Now I did not keep precise records. Nor is this scientifically researched. But based on three days of TV ads, I draw the following conclusions:

• Americans are awfully sick. Backaches, muscle pains, cramps, diarrhea, osteoporosis, bad breath, heartburn, headaches—you name it, we've got it. We also have available an array of drugs and pills to calm us down, jazz us up, remove the symptoms, or add the sparkle—whatever we want (all recommended by the leading doctors more than any other brand).

• Once cured, we can shape up. Firm abdominals, straight backs, tight biceps—we can get them all by using machines we lie on, stand under, or crouch beside (none of which do what a pile of manure and a good pitchfork won't do, I can just hear my dad say).

• Then, properly cured and toned, we can drive new cars, go on exotic cruises, or buy odd-named cereals that crackle, don't go soggy, or fill us with energy even before we're awake. After which we'll be happy, carefree, and wondrously fulfilled persons.

That's not what I read in the Scriptures. There, Jesus said, if you want to be a whole person, you have to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow him (Matt. 16:24). If you want to be great, you have to become a servant (Matt. 20:26).

Are you a child of God? Then you will have the fruits of the Spirit, says the apostle Paul—one of which is self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). "Live lives that are self-controlled," he tells Titus (2:12). Paul's fellow apostle, Peter, wrote: "Make every effort to support your faith . . . with self-control" (2 Pet. 1:5-6).

What a contrast! Deny, serve, control yourselves, the Bible says. Our culture's motto: accentuate the positive, take care of yourself—no one else will, be all you can be.

No wonder the gospel can be seen as subversive. No wonder some will turn away, even become scared. That's what happened when Paul preached to Felix. The governor became frightened and asked Paul to leave. The subjects of Paul's sermon: justice, judgment, and *self-control* (Acts 24:24-26).

Now there's nothing wrong with advertising, even television advertising; it serves us well when it tells us what options are available. Nor are we to neglect ourselves—in fact, we can love ourselves (as long as we do so equally for our neighbor—Mark 12:33).

The problem comes with the persistence of the message—not so much that we are to buy, but that we *deserve* these things. We should have a better life. We can truly be all we want to be.

Self. That is the message of so much surrounding us these days. It's subtle, it's persistent, it's one I find hard to resist. Even my attempts to be a good Christian—reading the Bible, praying, giving, doing good deeds—I too often measure more by what they do for me than for the one on whom the focus truly belongs: God.

As Christians, our purpose on earth is not our own joy or fulfillment. It is to worship and serve our God. The center of our universe is not to be ourselves but the one who made us. Our thoughts and actions are to cluster around the one who redeems and sustains us.

Yet how much of my world focuses on my self and my needs. In a North American culture that constantly massages us to think self, I find it most difficult—yet most necessary—to learn how to put and keep my focus on God.

After three days of watching drug, fitness, and automobile commercials, I was ready to get off my couch—and to do something nice for myself. That's when this message, flashed every 10 minutes or so by one of the 38 channels that come into our home, caught my attention: "Warning—research has determined that watching TV violence has a negative impact on children and youth"!

These days we could well use a similar one for adults: "Warning—it may not be researched, but watching TV advertisements, along with many other things in our society, has a negative impact on putting the focus of life where it truly belongs."—*jlp*

May 21, 1996

If rejection of violence is intrinsic to the gospel, can people committed to the military be a full part of the church community without changing its character?

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Valerie Weaver:
Between the rock of peace and the hard place of outreach 6

John K. Stoner:
Jesus and the centurion: learning the right things from this story 8

Hispanic Anabaptists meet for first time in North America 9

Writing American history through the eyes of peacemakers . . 11

Military personnel as peace church members:

Making sure which game we are playing

When does one become part of a peace church? By saying 'yes' to an invitation? Or by trying to learn the peace church way of thinking, seeing, and relating?

by J. Denny Weaver

I am a handball player, but some of my best friends are racquetball players. While the rivalry between us is friendly, it is a rivalry. In spite of the greater popularity of racquetball, we handball players know that we play the better sport!

Perhaps the rivalry between handball and racquetball provides a way to understand a question that has perplexed Mennonites in the last few years—how to deal with members of the military who want to join Mennonite churches. Joining the peace church is a lot like joining the community of handball players.

The peace churches, of which Mennonites are charter members, are a small minority within the broad Christian tradition. In the peace church, we have a friendly rivalry with adherents of that broad Christian tradition. In fact, some of our best friends belong to denominations in that broad Christian tradition.

Most would agree that our tradition and our theology are clear—we are a peace church. The question of military members is not so much a theological problem as a pastoral problem—

MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARIES ELKHART LIBRARY MAY 22 '96

The question of military members is not so much a theological as a pastoral problem—how to respond to people interested in the church who retain military ties.

how to respond to and disciple people who seem warmly interested in and ministered to by the fellowship of the church but who want to retain their military ties. The sports analogy does not solve that pastoral problem, but it may indicate a direction for our ongoing discussion of the pastoral issues.

The peace churches have a number of things in common with the broader Christian tradition. We all profess Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and as Savior and believe that the good news about Jesus Christ has universal validity for all peoples of the earth.

It is the difference between the peace churches and the broad Christian tradition that provokes what in modern times is a friendly rivalry. The peace churches believe that the life and teaching of Jesus, and most particularly Jesus' rejection of violence, are normative for Christians. If Jesus is the earthly manifestation of the reign of God, then violence is antithetical to and incompatible with the reign of God. As a consequence, those who would be part of the reign of God and who confess Jesus as God's anointed one and Savior should renounce violence.

Rather than simply defining Jesus in terms of "truly God" and "truly man," according to the formula of Chalcedon, the emphasis of Christology in the peace church will fall on the nature of the life lived by Jesus as the bearer of the reign of God. Rather than understanding salvation primarily in terms of forgiveness as an abstract transaction between God and humankind, salvation will be understood in terms of the way faith is lived. Rather than accommodating to the universal assumption of nations and governmental leaders that it is their duty to kill their enemies, adherents of the peace church believe in following Jesus' injunction to love their enemies. Rather than seeing an enemy as an object to kill, they will see enemies as people also loved by God.

Such differences between the peace churches and the denominations of western Christendom mean that in spite of their common Scriptures and common confession of Christ, the peace churches really are playing a different "game," just as handball is quite a different game from racquetball—although the two are played in the same court and with similar rules.

As people who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ and take the peace church stance seriously, we reach out and invite those people in the other traditions to join us in the peace church fellowship of Jesus Christ. And we try to be warm but honest in what accepting our invitation means. As Christians, we agree with them that in Jesus, the reign of God is present in history. But as a peace church we also believe that Jesus' rejection of the sword and violence means that violence is incompatible with the reign of God. Thus those who confess Jesus as God's Son should renounce violence.

Accepting the invitation to follow Christ in the way proclaimed by the peace churches is not easy. It may require real effort to accept the truth of the rejection of violence. It means learning a new and different way to see and do things—like handball players learn to use their weak hands in ways they previously thought impossible. When racquetball players learn handball, they must learn to hit the ball with both hands—that means with their weak or "off" hand as well as their dominant one. That Christians reject violence runs counter to the pervasive advocacy of violence that is taught in U.S. public schools and by many dimensions of the national ethos. Starting with their first history lesson about George Washington and the American Revolutionary war, our children are taught that freedom is linked to war and that maintenance of freedom depends upon war. Most of the United States national holidays commemorate and celebrate war. Political candidates stress their war records. The United States flag, the supreme symbol of the nation and the banner under which and for which American wars are fought, is virtually omnipresent in our society. School children regularly pledge their allegiance to this symbol of violence, and crowds stand in reverent attention before it while the national anthem is played at many public and governmental functions and at virtually all sporting events.

More than half of the national budget goes to the Pentagon to pay for past and future wars. The sacrosanct character of the military and the Pentagon budget is obvious from the cost of outrageously expensive weapons systems that do not even work. These costs receive barely a

flicker of acknowledgment from the public while programs for the poor, which occupy a much smaller portion of the national budget, receive great public attention as well as the blame for the budget deficit.

The United States has a pervasive and omnipresent faith in and reverence for violence. It is not easy for people shaped by it to learn a new way of thinking and living when they become part of a peace church fellowship. It may even be painful—some will leave military-related jobs, others will experience the disapproval of friends and family who see the decision as unpatriotic and a betrayal of the nation.

Many may politely decline our invitation, just like some of my friends who play racquetball refuse to try "my game." Some of my friends keep reassuring me that *sometime* they'll play —and never do. Others actually do try handball a few times and later stop because of momentary setbacks like bruises. One becomes a handball player by making the sustained effort to learn to play better. Becoming a handball player is a commitment continually renewed and never perfectly achieved.

It's not much different with the peace church —some may profess their intent to explore *sometime*—but that sometime never comes. Others ask and attend for a while and then disappear. When we next see them, they have returned to their original allegiance. Still others come a couple times, and they ask questions, and then they come some more. They make a real effort to understand what "peace" means, and they begin talking about how their lives are changing now that they are experiencing this peace church fellowship. And we realize that they have made themselves part of the fellowship.

When does one become a part of the peace church? When one says, "I will come"? After having attended three times or twenty times? How does one become a member of the peace church? By saying "yes" to an invitation? Or by trying to learn the peace church way of thinking and seeing and relating to people and persevering in that commitment in spite of the difficulties in unlearning the national culture of violence and withstanding the attitudes of friends who see joining the peace church as a betrayal of the nation?

And what about the people who never began the journey into the peace church or who made a brief start and withdrew? They remain our friends. We may still enjoy visiting with them or working with them as colleagues. But colleagueship and friendship cannot make them a part of the community of the peace church if they are unwilling to actually reject violence themselves.

This description of the options assumes two tracks; either one makes the effort to become a handball player or one does not. One is either committed to becoming shaped by the peace church or one is not. But some people argue for a third option.

I have an image of that third option for handball. After a couple handball workouts, the racquetballer says, "I'm having trouble with my left hand, and besides, my hand hurts. Next time we play, I'm going to use my racquet, but you keep on playing with your hands." I have done that—tried to play against someone who was using a racquet. It is a very different game than if each participant played by the same rules. The extra leverage provided by the racquet means that player can keep the ball moving fast enough and high enough that the handballer can rarely catch up. The game has become a hybrid, one which fits fully with neither of the two real games. I am no longer really playing handball, and if I play the hybrid game long enough, I will no longer be a handball player.

The third option suggested for the peace church seems to me much like the handball-racquetball hybrid. Some congregations want to accept as members people who are unable or unwilling to give up their faith in violence, people who remain on active duty in the U.S. military forces. Such military personnel may be good friends and nice people—just like my friends who continue to play racquetball in spite of my missionary zeal for handball. These military members of the peace church may share warmly in the fellowship and may even teach Sunday school classes. And the community may deeply appreciate their contribution to the community. But if these military people retain their faith in the American system of violence and continue to participate in that system, can they really be part of a peace church?

If the rejection of violence really is intrinsic to the gospel of Jesus Christ, how could people committed to the American military be a full part of that fellowship without changing its character? Or if the peace church believes that rejection of violence really is intrinsic to the gospel of Jesus Christ, why does someone who

(continued on page 6)

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert."—1 Peter 5:6-8a, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

The whole discussion on ***Dancing at the Table*** (Jan. 9 and following) and ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12 and following)—in fact, too much of *Gospel Herald's* material—reminded me of a poem my brother-in-law handed me once:

Vice is a monster
of so frightful mein
that to be hated
needs but to be seen.
But if seen too oft
we grow familiar with her face.
We first endure,
then pity,
then embrace!

God does not change. God's Word does not change. Sadly, we do.

Phyllis Kenagy
Hubbard, Ore.

I was glad to read the letter from Mitchell Brown (Mar. 19) in which he quoted Rom. 1:4 and Mark 10:18 and said: "[Systematic theology] must always be of secondary importance to the biblical story."

One of the tragic consequences of the doctrine of the Trinity—which always puts the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son—is a hindrance to internalizing the dynamic message of the Bible and Jesus about the Spirit.

Jesus said of the Spirit: "You know him, for he lives with you" (John 14:17).

Betty Lou Olson
Calico Rock, Ark

Integration Committee Recommends New Name (Apr. 2). Thus far I've heard only one name for us integrated Mennonites that I like—the one suggested some time ago by Geraldine Harder: Mennonite Church of Christ.

This name applies to all—black, brown, or white. It does not limit us to country or continent. Anyone who confesses Christ as Savior will feel comfortable with it.

Those who want a stronger emphasis on Mennonite may need to reread J. Denny Weaver's article, ***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** (Jan. 23), Mark R. Wenger's ***Is There Room for Sinners Among the Saints?*** (Apr. 16), or Ted Grimsrud's ***Making the Penultimate Too Important Often Leads to Violence*** (Apr. 23).

Mennonite Church of Christ includes everyone. It is short and easy to remember. And it explains simply where our hope is: Christ Jesus.

Maynard Shetler
Scottdale, Pa.

In his letter (Apr. 16), Daniel B. Grimes expressed sadness that many Mennonites do not support our church colleges. I too am grieved when I encounter such lack of support.

I write as one who is a graduate of Eastern Mennonite University and who has worked with the EMU development staff on a number of projects. I have found the EMU administration to be thoroughly dedicated and committed, concerned with both academic and spiritual development. They are deeply interested in the concerns of the constituency. I'm sure the same can be said for the administrations of our other church colleges.

It is from these colleges that our leaders come. Some years ago, at an EMU alumni banquet, all those involved in service for the church were asked to stand. Well over half of the people rose to their feet. Would these persons have been serving the church had they graduated from a secular institution?

We need to support our church colleges in these ways:

- Pray: for leadership teams, faculty, students, and support staff.
- Give: those of us who don't have children to support in college could consider contributing to scholarship funds.
- Encourage: students to attend church colleges.

Our colleges deserve and need our brightest and our best.

Rhoda Nolt
Ephrata, Pa.

Is There Room for Sinners Among the Saints? (Apr. 16). I didn't know the story of Rahab before, but I can surely relate to her. A few years ago I stood at my window and watched the Mennonites file in and out of the church across the street. I was sick, afraid, unemployable, unsociable, and recovering from a mental illness and drug and alcohol addiction.

One evening I ventured out of my self-made prison and met a Christian neighbor, a Mennonite. He invited me to church. Me!

I struggled with whether or not to go. If this man really knew me, would he invite me? Finally, my desperation and my longing for a relationship with God made me enter that church. I was welcomed and asked to return. On the days I didn't come, someone checked up on me, but not in an intrusive way.

Today I am a member at Mennonite Church of the Servant in Wichita, Kan. It's been a milestone in my recovery. Since the time of my conversion, through meditation and prayer and guidance, I have been able to utilize my experiences as a sinner and as a Christian to help others. I now work as a drug and alcohol counselor. Here I listen and pray for the addicts, the prostitutes, the homeless, the mentally ill, the abused, the incarcerated.

I've been privileged to witness people pray to God for the first time in many years. I've watched transformations occur as people look at themselves honestly and accept Christ into their lives. I've also seen failure, misery, and self-destruction for those who didn't.

God has forgiven my sins. Christ died for my sins. And Mennonites have shown me a new way to live. With them I've been able to share my story without shame. And God has enabled me to hear their stories without judgment.

My gratitude cannot be measured.

Jeffree Coba
Wichita, Kan.

I read with amazement the letter from the 75 pastors who attended the Promise Keepers Clergy Conference (Apr. 9). I too attended all the sessions of this gathering—three miles down the street from me—and did not come away with a condemnation of the church's programs. Rather, I received an intensified zeal to be more open to the Spirit's leading as I participate in and support those programs.

A number of our men from the Berea Mennonite Church attended the summer session of Promise Keepers, and our leadership team also attended the clergy conference. The net result has been an infusion of the Spirit into our local program and increased concern by our men to carry their share of the load in both family and church. Praise God for that.

What I do see in the statements about programs in the letter from the 75 pastors are a lot of ideas from cell church advocate Ralph Neighbors in his book, *Where Do We Go from Here?* I didn't hear those ideas at the Promise Keepers conference I attended.

Vernon Schertz
Atlanta, Ga.

Thanks for printing the letter from the 75 Mennonite ministers who attended the Promise Keepers Clergy Conference (Apr. 9). I too attended that meeting and affirm what they wrote 100 percent. The Mennonite church needs Promise Keepers!

Ken Nauman
Arcadia, Fla.

As an 89-year-old, I want to respond to the anonymous letter from the man with sexual addiction (Apr. 23). As a teenager, I heard teaching about dedicating all of life to God (I think there should still be more teaching and preaching on this subject). In dedicating our lives to God, we need to ask God to control our passions too.

I also learned that Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). This "world" includes the lust of the flesh, which is the source of the problem for one with sexual addiction.

It's a big help to know whose side we are on. As a prayer warrior, I have made a choice to be on the side of Jesus. Though we may lose frequent battles, we can be confident that Jesus' forces will win the war.

Philippians 3:13-14 holds out a good model for us all. We need to forget the past and look forward in hope of winning the prize God has promised.

Roy Hartzler
Hesston, Kan.

In your editorial, ***Peace, Peace, When There May Be No Peace*** (Apr. 23), you write: "A 58-year-old leader is told twice she is out of order in trying to bring a proposal to a meeting. Then, when she chooses to remain silent, she is criticized for not speaking up."

This is not what happened. This person made a *substitute* motion during the discussion while a previous motion was on the floor. This was inappropriate. The motion on the floor should be passed, rejected, or amended before a substitute motion can be made.

This type of reporting stirs up division in the church—the very problem you were trying to address.

Lester L. Mann
Freeport, Ill.

Thank you for your editorial, ***Peace, Peace, When There May Be No Peace*** (Apr. 23). Those who heed its wisdom will do more to construct an authentic peace church than the entire guild of ethically correct Anabaptists which rages against militarism and celebrates the virtues of its pacifism while loving peace more than mercy. Its peace destroyed many.

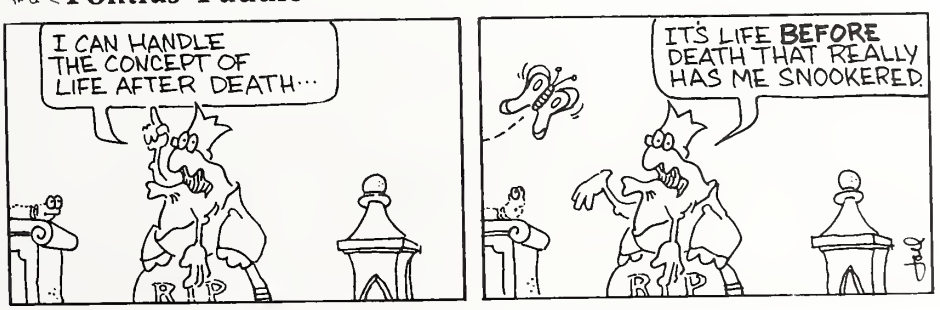
Scott Holland
McKeesport, Pa.

In your editorial, ***Peace, Peace, When There May Be No Peace*** (Apr. 23), you delved into unseen truth and brought it to light. This is a great service to the church. Your position, and your ability to witness these things firsthand across the church, makes your words particularly strong.

I hope that from time to time you will dare to show us what you see. No one else is in such a position to say such things. Thank you for speaking.

Ryan Ahlgrim
Indianapolis, Ind.

Pontius' Puddle



Military personnel as peace church members: Making sure which game we are playing

(continued from page 3)

does not accept that gospel want to be part of the fellowship? I fear that the peace church which accepts military members has already become the hybrid. It has not yet abandoned its overt peace church orientation, but it has begun a process which will mean—if it continues—that eventually it will no longer be recognizable as a peace church.

Clearly, learning the new language, activities, and attitudes of the peace church does not happen all at once. It is a process that requires patience and persistence, both on the part of the church and the new disciple, just as a new handball player does not immediately become comfortable hitting offhand shots. The peace church learner may experience setbacks, just as bruises may slow the progress of a beginning handballer.

And there are different ways to define membership and adherence to and participation in the group. I am not calling for a legalistic discipline and outright rejection of people who do not conform to a rigid format. The fact that one is making an effort to learn the new skill—

Between the rock of peace and

How did names like Langley Air Force Base, Fort Eustis, Fort Monroe, and the Naval Weapons Station enter the vocabularies of Mennonites in Virginia Conference?

It begins something like this: in 1990 the Warwick and Norfolk district councils of Virginia Mennonite Conference formulated the "Tidewater Document" as guidelines relating to members of Mennonite churches who are employed by the military. "While understood to be 'emerging understandings,' " reads an article in an April 1995 issue of *Gospel Herald*, "the document allows membership to military personnel under certain conditions."

The understandings have been emerging ever since—the districts hosted a consultation to discuss military membership and Anabaptist thought, *Gospel Herald* readers have written reams of letters to the editor on their opinions, and Virginia Conference has had numerous fervent go-rounds on the issue. In an attempt to wrap together some of the uncomfortably loose ends, the Virginia Conference made two statements in January 1996—one against violence that concludes that "loyalty to the military oath is incompatible with loyalty to one's covenant as a disciple of Jesus Christ," and a simultaneous agreement to "remain in full fellowship" with congregations who disagree.

In the eye of all this storm is Calvary Community Church—a mostly African-American, 600-member congregation squeezed into a busy section of Hampton, Va. Over 30 members of Calvary serve in the military—by far the largest employer in the region with five major installations within a couple of miles. By one estimate, one in three people in the Tidewater area is employed by the military or as a civilian in related services.

The Virginia Conference discussions did not originally grow out of Calvary, nor is it by any means the only congregation in the conference dealing with the issue of military employment among their membership. "All those churches struggle with it," says conference moderator Laban Peachey of the eleven churches in the Warwick and Norfolk districts.

And although "it is harder for people whose lives are constrained by racism and poverty to say no to the military," according to Titus Peachey of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. peace and justice ministries, he is also reluctant to cast it as an issue "uniquely attached to communities of color. It exists everywhere," Peachey says.

But Calvary's size does make it a notable example of a Mennonite church caught between the "rock" of Anabaptist theology and the "hard place" of outreach in an area teeming with military bases.

Bishop Leslie Francisco III of Calvary Community Church says he teaches "foundational truths and the basics of Christian living" in a four-week new members orientation. A short introduction to the Mennonite Church comes in the form of an informational brochure published by Mennonite Board of Missions. If the newcomers are new Christians, Francisco encourages them to attend a new

whether to hit a left hand or to look at the world through peace church eyes—is more important than the immediate results. It ought to be clear, however, which game one is trying to learn. Even a skilled athlete is not becoming a handball player if he continues to play racquetball while expressing words of support for handball. A military person is not learning a peace church outlook as long as she or he professes faith in the peace church but clings nonetheless to the military position.

The desire to incorporate military people as military people into the peace church fellowship is a serious temptation for the peace church. May God give us the courage to avoid that temptation and the wisdom to know how to do peace church evangelism and to maintain good relationships with our friends who maintain their orientation within the American system of violence.

J. Denny Weaver is chair of the history and religion department at Bluffton (Ohio) College where he teaches courses in theology and ethics.

the hard place of outreach

believer's class that meets once a week for six months.

And what about teaching on the peace position? "I share where I am as a pastor—that I'm a conscientious objector," says Francisco of his presentations in the new members orientation. But he is careful to note that "we don't make a big 'to-do' over their enlistment" when people come who work in the military. "We don't really badger them," Francisco says.

Calvary Community members in the military work as mechanics, dentists, computer programmers, and administrators. And Francisco draws a line between this level of involvement and killing. "I don't feel participation in the military is sin," he says. "If the time would come when they would have to kill, I hope there would be enough teaching in their minds that they would make the right choice."

Francisco also refuses to let the topic of violence in North American society—gangs, alcoholism, and spouse abuse—creep out of the discussion of violence and military membership. "Our communities are going to 'hell in a handbasket' while we're fighting inwardly about the military," he says. "I refuse to get hung up on the military issue when the violence that surrounds me as a pastor is knocking at my door every day."

The question of consistency comes up repeatedly as well. "Who's at fault? Is it the man in the military or is it the person who is building the ship? Regardless of how much we preach and teach peace, we enjoy the privileges of a free society because of a strong military," Bishop Leslie Francisco III says.

In few places is the military so visibly strong as in the Tidewater region. "If they shut down those bases, it would have a devastating effect on the economy," says Stan Maclin of Richmond, Va., former president of the African-American Mennonite Association.

"I've heard people say it's either the street corner gangs or the military for some of these people," says Laban Peachey. He says he has heard discussion on developing alternatives for employment for people currently in the military, but nothing concrete has transpired.

Titus Peachey of MCC says there is a consultation on this subject scheduled by the general boards of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church for November 1996, and he hopes the issue of providing educational and employment alternatives is addressed.

Plans for a service station and restaurant are underway in the Calvary congregation as a way of providing economic alternatives for people, says Francisco. He adds that the congregation is helping to pay for graduate level education for a member of the church who would have had to extend his obligation to the military for them to provide him with a scholarship.

"It was good what the Lord was saying to the fifth century," says Francisco about the issue, "but we want to hear what he's saying in the 21st century."

—*Valerie Weaver*

Jesus and the centurion:

Learning the right things from this story

by John K. Stoner

Who was the centurion—that man in Matthew 8 who believed that Jesus could heal his servant? It is easier to say who he has become in Christian—or, increasingly—in peace church circles. The centurion has become the human model through whom Jesus is made compatible with violence, the military profession, and the ubiquitous, deadly, and unnecessary institution of war.

This is no small load for one man in history to carry. The nameless centurion has risen to mythic proportions. When someone asks whether Jesus or his followers may be engaged in some aspect of the vast superstructure which undergirds the institution of war, the discussion seldom goes very far before Jesus' response to the Roman centurion is appealed to as proof that Jesus did not condemn intergroup lethal conflict.

The account of the centurion in Matthew 8 reports that a centurion in Capernaum appealed to Jesus to come and heal his servant. Jesus responded that he would come. The centurion immediately protested that he was unworthy for Jesus to come under his roof, that Jesus could just speak the word and the servant would be healed. "I understand how authority works," the centurion said. "I speak a word and men obey my command. You can do the same. No need to come to my house."

Jesus was amazed at the man's faith, and exclaimed, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then Jesus turned to the centurion and said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour. End of the story.

There is no report that Jesus rebuked the centurion for his soldiering profession. This is taken as strong evidence or even absolute proof that Jesus approved of soldiering, justified war, and was not a pacifist.

At least two things are lacking in this use of the story. First, it reflects a total disregard for the most elementary sensitivity to the cultural, religious, and political realities of the situation. Who was a centurion to a Jew in first century Palestine? Everything in the story hangs on the cultural implications of the encounter between Jesus and the centurion.

The centurion was the feared and hated representative of the Roman occupation forces in Palestine. Some thirty years earlier,Roman forces at nearby Sepphoris were led by centurions to crucify 2,000 Jews along the roadway in retaliation for a Jewish uprising against the Roman occupation.

Such deeds are not forgotten in thirty years. Jews had no admiration for the spiffy military uniforms of Roman centurions. They certainly did not see centurions as the guardians of democracy and the freedom to worship God as they pleased, unmolested in their comfortable Sunday morning sanctuaries. The centurion was a hated enemy soldier. He was not one of ours but one of theirs.

Second, a militaristic interpretation ignores the main point of this story—the astonishing discovery of faith in a character as foreign and repulsive as a centurion. Matthew accents this by reporting Jesus' shocking announcement that all sorts of people from east and west will enter God's reign, while the insiders—the churchgoing, presumed heirs—will be shut out altogether. Luke dramatizes this alien faith by reporting that the centurion sends Jewish elders to request healing for his son. The Jewish heirs come and begin to make an appeal for the healing based on the worthiness of the centurion. Then the centurion sends friends to Jesus, saying that he feels unworthy that Jesus should come under his roof. The play on "worthy-unworthy" sets the stage for Jesus' words: "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith" (Luke 7:9).

Jesus' encounter with the centurion is another story of astonishing grace. God is gracious even to enemy soldiers. Jesus did not condemn the centurion; he set him on the path of redemption. That is what Jesus does for sinners, for transgressors, for enemies—for people. Jesus did not condemn the woman taken in adultery. He did not thereby put his stamp of approval for all time on adultery, but he set the woman on the path of redemption and a new life. He did the same for the centurion.

The only thing we can learn about Jesus' attitude toward violence and war from his encounter with the centurion is a surprising example of how to think about enemy soldiers.

John K. Stoner is the coordinator of New Call to Peacemaking, a cooperative program of Brethren, Friends, and Mennonites. He lives in Akron, Pa.

Hispanic Anabaptists hold first North American gathering; agree to form association to work at common concerns

Miami, Fla. (MCC U.S.-Meetinghouse)—For several years, some Hispanic leaders have dreamed of a gathering of North American Hispanic Anabaptists, spanning denominational and national backgrounds.

This dream came to fruition when some 110 Hispanic church leaders met here May 2-4 for the "First Encounter of Ibero-American Anabaptists in North America."

They represented six groups—Brethren in Christ, General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church, Mennonite Convention of Puerto Rico, and the Amor Viviente churches. Their national origins stretched from Mexico to Argentina, from Puerto Rico to Colombia. Delegates represented some 5,000-6,000 Hispanic Anabaptists in more than 100 North American congregations.

Creation of association. Delegates enthusiastically approved the creation of an association of Hispanic Anabaptists of North America. The association—to have an executive committee of two representatives from each denomination—will work together on common concerns, from such practical matters as Sunday school curriculum to loftier questions of "prophetic discernment of mission outreach" and potentially thorny theological issues, such as men's and women's roles in church and home.

Hispanic leaders will ask for support in this new initiative from Mennonite Central Committee U.S., whose staff helped plan the Miami consultation.

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. . . A threefold cord is not quickly broken." Victor Amador quoted these verses from Ecclesiastes in a reflection titled "Unity." "We all have different gifts; if we put them together and rejoice in what is happening in the different groups, then nothing can hold back the Spirit's work," said Amador, an Amor Viviente pastor. "Material riches are important but more important are spiritual riches, and we have an incredible bank of spiritual riches. Among us are men and women with tremendous gifts and abilities, and if we decide to work together, we can accomplish much," Amador said.

—Emily Will

Women's roles emerge as priority at Hispanic meeting

Miami, Fla. (MCC U.S.-Meetinghouse)—Women's roles in church and in the home emerged as an urgent issue at the "First Encounter of Ibero-American Anabaptists in North America." Planners had to squeeze additional discussion time into an already-tight agenda to deal with concerns raised.

The some 35 women in attendance clearly want change. They desire recognition and validation for their work in the church, including in pastoral roles.

Following a talk, "The Experience of the Ibero-American Anabaptist Woman," by Juanita Nuñez, who is active in a Mennonite church in Apopka, Fla., participants broke into discussion groups and then reported back to the full assembly.

A diversity of beliefs unfolded. Nicolas Angustia, of Dominican heritage, said that although he had left a woman in charge of his church in New York City while he attended the conference, "there's danger if a woman is in charge in the home." Citing Ephesians 5, he said, "Man is the head of woman and if anyone wants to debate that, he has to debate it with God." Augustia admitted his beliefs may not be popular.

Some men spoke of their own change of heart and deed as a result of their new lives in Christ. Samuel López said he grew up in the "machista" or male-dominated Mexican culture, where husbands are expected to show—often with blows—that they control their wives. But, said López, president of the North American Mennonite Hispanic Convention, he came to see that Jesus does not want women to be men's slaves. It's neither men nor women who are to rule in the home but Jesus Christ, López said.

'The Spirit will give us unity.' "Along with the Bible, we need a discerning community in which to exchange experiences and an openness to the Spirit," said Daniel Schipani, professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. "The Spirit will give us the unity we want [on such issues]," said Schipani, who is from Argentina.

Men and women's roles will be among the theological questions to be tackled by the newly formed association of North American Hispanic Anabaptists. Twenty-three women also met together over a breakfast to discuss the challenges they face. "The women were eager to talk about family issues they are dealing with—single parenting, singleness, violence in the community and in the home, and sexual abuse," relates Tina Mast Burnett, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. women's concerns coordinator, who also attended the early morning gathering. Mast Burnett says it was valuable for the women to hear from others who are dealing with the same issues as they struggle to support women in their congregations.

—Emily Will

José Ortiz, professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and Rosa Sierra, a school counselor from Puerto Rico, take part in a panel presentation on "How to work together—theology, missions, collaboration" at the first gathering of North American Hispanic Anabaptists held in Miami, Fla.

MBM workers begin work outside Cotonou

Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) staff writer Tom Price recently traveled to Benin as part of a 17-day trip to Africa. This is the last in a series about Mennonites in West Africa.—Editor

Dassa, Benin (MBM)—"Wi. Wa. Wo. Wu. We."

Under the direction of a teacher, students in a literacy class in the village of Hounkpogon in central Benin pronounce and write these consonant and vowel combinations in their native Fon.

A few miles south in the village of Tagon, cooperatives of men and women work the dry land, preparing their fields for planting manioc, cassava, rice, corn, beans, yams, and cotton.

Aspects of development. These efforts take place under the jurisdiction of the Association of Evangelical Churches for Social Promotion, which is involved in a unique partnership with MBM workers Philip and Christine Lindell Detweiler.

"My angle is to empower other people and to help them progress in the development process," says Philip, a trained health worker from Goshen, Ind. "Development I take to be the development of the entire person. It has spiritual aspects. It has economic aspects. It has social aspects. If you truly want to make a complete puzzle, you have to focus on all the different pieces."

Philip Lindell Detweiler, a public health worker with MBM, holds a child in the Dassa region of Benin.

Women participate in a literacy class in the Dassa region of Benin. The class is run by the Association of Evangelical Churches for Social Promotion, which has a partnership with MBM workers Christine and Philip Lindell Detweiler.

For the first time, MBM workers in Benin will live and work in the rural regions north of Cotonou, outside the urban center of 335,000 people.

"Our dream has always been to work at the village level," says Christine, a nutritionist. "All over West Africa, MBM's work has been done in urban settings. We feel like we are going a little bit outside of that pattern."

As with much of MBM's work in West Africa, the Lindell Detweilers will work with Africa's independent churches, a variety of evangelical and Pentecostal Christian denominations that were born predominantly not as transplanted Western churches, but as indigenous African groups.

ANABAPTISTS IN WEST AFRICA

The Lindell Detweilers work with the Association of the Evangelical Churches for Social Promotion, a cooperative effort of eight denominations. "Our main goal is to fight against hunger, but one of our goals is also to evangelize," says Matthew Modibo, the association's president.

Vanguard of literacy. The association's work with cooperatives for women reflects the Christian community's "desire to emancipate and improve the status of women," Modibo says.

This African emancipation proclamation also provides the reason for including women in literacy training in a society where the education of women is not valued. "Literacy is empowering for people, especially for women, to help them control their situation a bit more. It helps them, especially from being cheated in the market," says Philip. "It is the churches that are in the vanguard of literacy work because they want their people to be able to read the Scriptures."

After a half-hour drive on a dirt road, Lindell Detweiler arrives in the village of Affossogbi, where he climbs out of his station wagon and is handed a chubby infant boy by the first village woman to meet him. The trained public health worker quickly looks over the infant, noting that he has received good nutrition from the diet of yams and other garden vegetables the villagers grow themselves.

Most villagers have access to good nutrition, according to Christine. She notes that at the same time some children still suffer from malnutrition. "They often have access to good sources of protein," she says, "but usually, instead of using that, they sell the good sources of protein to plug other economic holes."

In the villages, the Lindell Detweilers will work to help mothers provide adequate nutrition for their children. They also will focus on training lay people to serve as village health workers.

Focusing on a 25-to-30-mile region surrounding Dassa, the Lindell Detweilers will provide health care where few other health workers want to tread. "During the rainy season, some of this area is really inaccessible by most types of vehicles," Christine says.

Development workers have tried unsuccessfully to bring improvements like this before. But this time, the Lindell Detweilers say, the effort's initiative coming from a coalition of churches will make the difference. "One of the reasons we want to work and help the churches is because we see a motivated community; it is a community that is really willing to work through the process," he says.—*Tom Price*

Writing American history that highlights stories of peacemakers

Lancaster, Pa.—In American classrooms, students study history through a chronology of wars.

But violence is not the only voice of history. People have searched for viable alternatives to violence throughout history and have often succeeded in averting bloodshed.

"The time has come for the pacifist reinterpretation of American history," says James Juhnke of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., one of the initiators of the Nonviolent America Project. "A peace-minded history will highlight moments of creative diplomacy where people and nations acted in freedom to avoid war. It will also lift up those proposals and ways not traveled by which wars may have been avoided."

The project, with roots at the Kansas Peace Institute and Lecture Series at Bethel College, seeks to re-envision American history with peace values.

The costs of violence. Coauthored by Carol Hunter of Earlham College, Richmond, Ind., and Juhnke, the book is tentatively titled *The Missing Peace: The Search for Alternatives to Violence in American History.* It surveys American history from its Native American origins through the end of the Cold War. Three questions frame each chapter:

- What are the issues and alternatives?
- Who was working for peace and justice in this situation?
- Was this violence or war necessary?

The history book tries to "portray the costs of war and the horrors of war," says Juhnke, as well as highlight the stories of people who worked for peaceful alternatives to violence.

A country made by war? "We are questioning core, often unexamined assumptions about the underlying premises from which U.S. history is taught," says Hunter. "Few people remember the details of history, but we all carry a very vivid history that has been absorbed rather than processed, and so it remains subconscious. Our nation, we all instinctively assume, is a country made by war," she and Juhnke write in the preface to the book.

An example of where the text differs from traditional history books is the American Revolution. At the First Continental Congress in 1774, a delegate from Pennsylvania introduced a plan that might have averted the revolution, according to the authors. The plan called for creating an American branch of Parliament which would share power with the British Parliament over American affairs, giving the colonists representation in colonial government. The plan was ultimately rejected by the narrowest of margins—six colonies voting against and five in favor. The delegates, fearful of the plan becoming public knowledge, struck it from official session records. Subsequently, the plan does not appear in traditional texts, but it proves that the colonists were searching for alternatives, say the authors.

Hunter and Juhnke hope to have the manuscript to a publisher by the fall of 1998. They would like to see the book used in advanced high school history classes and undergraduate classes in college.

"This [book] is more than a call to redress a prevailing overemphasis on militarism or to allow a small place for peacemakers to stand on the historiographical stage," Juhnke says. "This is a struggle for the identity of America."—*Valerie Schrag with Valerie Weaver*

Carol Hunter of Richmond, Ind., and James Juhnke of North Newton, Kan., are writing an American history curriculum that emphasizes peace values.

Anabaptist leaders talk about spiritual revival

Baltimore, Md.—A group of pastors from Mennonite, Church of the Brethren, and Vineyard Christian Fellowship congregations met here recently to discuss the restoration of "radical Christianity" and spiritual revival. This was the second meeting this year for the group of twenty pastors representing churches and institutions from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Ohio, and Kansas.

"Our vision at this meeting is to provide a relational alliance of churches that embrace the biblical foundations of radical Christianity without compromise," says Gerald Martin, pastor of Cornerstone Church and Ministries, Harrisonburg, Va.

A large portion of the meeting was spent in worship and prayer, during which participants offered prayers of repentance for the "deep root of unfaithfulness to Christ" in their denominations.

One participant said that the meeting was the beginning of "a new reformation that gets to the core of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus."

This year's meetings have resulted in the formation of a network of churches rallying around basic "kingdom principles," as outlined by Dale Stoll, pastor of Tri-Lakes Community Church in Bristol, Ind.

Plans are being made for a conference in 1997 on the "restoration of radical Christianity." The conference will use Stoll's principles as the basis for a nationwide "wake-up call" to the church.

Date set for integration of women's groups

Elkhart, Ind. (WMSC)—The summer of 1997 is the target date for the integration of Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC) of the Mennonite Church with Women in Mission (WM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

This was the consensus at the first two WMSC-WM integration meetings in January and April. Preliminary ideas were added to and approved by both executive committees in March. Items such as constitution, name, and organizational structure will be worked on this summer and proposals brought to a joint executive committee meeting in October 1996.

This allows WMSC and WM executives to refine, approve, and interpret the new proposals with women in their respective groups over the winter. Voting may be done by mail in the spring or at the denominational assemblies held in Orlando, Fla., and Winnipeg, Man., in the summer of 1997.

Integration processes vary. A joint search committee will simultaneously work on staffing needs.

Meanwhile, local groups will move at their own pace as integration processes vary from conference to conference.

—*Eve McMaster*

YES teams leave. Eight Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams left the United States in April for service assignments in Romania, Wales, Trinidad, Philippines, Barbados-Grenada, Harrisburg, Pa., and Lebanon, Pa. The teams spent the past three months in preparation for their service assignments. The program is sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions. Participants who trained at the Baltimore YES center are:

Front row (left to right): Julia Weldy to Pembroke, Wales; Zama Cameron to Philippines; Janine Rohrer to Wales; Nicki Stinson to Wales; Lynette Schroeder to Barbados-Grenada; Melanie Kurtz to Philippines.

Second row: Stephanie Epp to Wales; Melissa Nissley to Barbados-Grenada; Melanie Martin to Wales; Alvin Streicher to Philippines; Jorge Paredes to Philippines; Yvonne Newswanger to Romania; Tania Guerreo to Romania.

Back row: Chris Mast to Wales; Linford Burkholder to Philippines; Brian Myers to Romania; Rolando Zelaya to Romania; Bernard Bwala to Barbados-Grenada; Edgar Cano to Barbados-Grenada; Chad Lacher to Wales.

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• **Historical Committee meets.** The Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church recommended the appointment of two General Conference Mennonite Church historians as members during their April 12-13 meeting in Sarasota, Fla. The committee is recommending decentralized, regional archival centers in light of the integration process. Members also considered the possibility of converting its holdings of 10-12 million pages to computer images to make research more efficient.

• **Pastor transitions:**

J. Lester Graybill is retiring from a pastorate at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Roger Hochstetler has finished a two-year interim term as pastor of the Sandia BIC and Mennonite Church, Albuquerque, N.M. Roger and Glennis' new address is 8402 Everett Way C, Arvada, CO 80005

• **Coming events:**

CPS 20/40 reunion, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Oct. 8-10. Contact Lester Roth at 614 385-5383.

• **Job openings:**

Executive director, Little Eden Camp, Onekama, Mich. Year-round position open in July. Salary plus housing, utilities, and medical insurance. Send résumé to Merrill Nofziger, 18041 D.E., Wauseon, Ohio 43567.

Principal, Sarasota (Fla.) Christian School. Begins in August. Call Gene Muller at 941 371-6481.

Staff positions, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa. Full-time openings for office clerk-reservationist and in maintenance-carpentry. Contact Lanny Millette at 717 896-3441.

Teaching positions, Lititz (Pa.) Area Mennonite School. Openings in kindergarten, second grade, and middle school (includes 6th-grade language arts, Bible, science, and 8th-grade math). Applications available from 717 626-9551.

• **Change of address:**

Paul Lederach, 203 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446.

NEW MEMBERS

Bahia Vista, Sarasota, Fla.: Janele Bailey, Melanie Brubacher, Kate Denlinger, Justin Kornhaus, Andy Siegenthaler, and Aaron Zimmerman.

Edson, Alta.: Louise Duranceau, Allen Fossheim, and Darryl Leach.

First of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.: Donna Moser, Vern Zehr Jr., and Christine Walseman Zehr.

Good, Bainbridge, Pa.: Ryan Bechtold, Shawn Kanode, Catherine Olweiler, Daniel Olweiler, Ronald Olweiler, Shannon Olweiler, Jason Risser, Justin Risser, Betty Shank, and Pam Stoner.

Good Shepherd, Phoenix, Ariz.: Darrel Edmonds, Merrie Edmonds, and Harry Edmonds.

Groffdale, Leola, Pa.: Emily Bauman, Chris and Donna Burns, Rachel Day, Darin Espigh, John and Leane Groff, Louella Groff, Phil Herr, Uyan Tran, and Naomi Weaver.

Hernley, Manheim, Pa.: Gregory L. Ressler, Brian E. Martin, Janelle L. Snavely, Tyler J. Snavely, Annie E. Johnson, and Trisha N. Weaver.

Locust Grove, Belleville, Pa.: Robert and Emma Templeton, Louise Byler, and Kim Yoder.

Mt. Pleasant, Chesapeake, Va.: Laura Joy Bergey, Patty, Carole, and Crystal Crowling, Siobhan Newman, Chris Brickhouse, Melinda Crowling, Doug Garnand, Cheryl Harrison, and Janet Wenger.

Prescott, Ariz.: Chris Belmore, Crystal Belmore, Robert Francis, Donna Ketring, Elissa Ketring, Katrina Ketring, Olene Comer, Jean Yoder, and Gayle Yoder.

Salford, Harleysville, Pa.: Ashley Janine Clemens, Juliana Clemmer, Andrew Dale Frankenfield, Amanda Erin Scheetz, Jana Lynn Hostetter, Abram A. and Grace D. Landis, and Carla Sue Clemmer.

Waynesboro, Va.: Claude R. Wine, Beulah O. Wine, and Jessica L. Kohler.

West Union, Parnell, Iowa: Tami and Jeremy Brenneman, Dave Geyer, Cindy Gingerich, Elizabeth Meyer, Doug and Candi Schmieder, John and Marilyn Yoder, Lowell and Mary Yoder, and Theresa Yoder.

Whitestone, Hesston, Kan.: Ed and Evelyn Peters, Chris Koehn, Jeff Lindberg, Luke Mullet, Rob Christner, Heidi Buller, Teresa Christner, Sarah Horst, and Talashia Keim.

MARRIAGES

Driedger-Mears: Kevin Driedger, Winkler, Man. (Grace), and June Mears, Pasadena, Calif. (Pasadena), March 30, by Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau.

Harrington-Shetler: Jennifer Harrington, Kendallville, Ind. (Catholic), and Willard Shetler, Goshen, Ind. (Mt. Joy), April 20, by Robert Lee Shreiner.

Kauffman-Wilkins: Janet Kauffman, West Liberty, Ohio (Bethel), and Joseph Wilkins, West Liberty, Ohio (United Church of Christ), April 20, by Ben Eberly.

Kaufmann-Smoker: Britt Kaufmann, New Paris, Ind. (Assembly), and Chad Smoker, Goshen, Ind. (College), April 20, by Art Smoker (father of the groom) and Keith Graber Miller.

BIRTHS

Bontrager, Shelley Martin and Wendell, Middlebury, Ind., Hannah Elise (third child), April 29.

Garnand, Tracy Yoder and Doug, Chesapeake, Va., Shelby Lynn (second child), April 19.

Godshall, Teresa Anders and Michael, Alburtis, Pa., Skyler Chase (first child), April 23.

Kirkland, Brenda Cressman and Andrew, Waterloo, Ont., Jillian Marie (third child), April 19.

Krahn, Stacy Haines and Brian, Elkhart, Ind., Adam Haines (second child), April 22.

Leyden, Andrea Litwiller and Michael, Washington, Iowa, Michael Tanner (first child), April 4.

McFarland, Mabel Meck and John, Harrisonburg, Va., Josiah Christian (third child), April 23.

Miller, Lori Weirich and Orvan, Middlebury, Ind., Amanda Jane (third child), April 15.

Moyer, JoAnn Grasse and Michael, Chalfont, Pa., Issac Andrew (second child), April 29.

Nissley, Brenda Stecher and Scott, Bloomfield, Mont., Elizabeth Christina (first child), Feb. 14.

Reinford, Jina and Jeff, Green Lane, Pa., Laura Elizabeth (second child), April 21.

Smoker, Gaye Muns and Glenn, Avondale, Ariz., Derek Allen (first child), April 13.

Thomas, Joan and Arlan, Hollsopple, Pa., Kelsey Jo (first child), April 6.

Weirich, Tracey and Kyle, Knox, Ind., Carol Mae (first child), April 8.

DEATHS

Baer, Irvin S., 90, Maugansville, Md. Born: Dec. 19, 1905, Washington County, Md., to Abram H. and Elizabeth Shank Baer. Died: April 12, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa. Survivors—sons: Glenn E., Ronald L., Duane A.; half brothers and sisters: Alvey and Abram Baer, Bertha Martin, Ida Schelle; 4 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, 2 stepgrandchildren. Predeceased by: Ella Elizabeth Grove Baer (wife). Funeral and burial: April 16, Marion Mennonite Church, by Darrell Baer, Nelson Martin, and James Stauffer.

Dierwechter, John R., 86, Schaefferstown, Pa. Born: March 23, 1910, Heidelberg Twp., Pa., to Abraham K. and Emma Royer Dierwechter. Died: April 22, 1996, Hershey, Pa., of a heart attack. Survivors—daughters: Esther, Grace, Naomi. Predeceased by: Sarah Bollinger Dierwechter (wife). Congregational membership: Lititz Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 26, Clauser Funeral Home, by Dennis Ernest. Burial: Schaefferstown Cemetery.

Eshleman, John C., 78, Greencastle, Pa. Born: May 21, 1917, Antrim, Twp., Pa., to J. Ira and Nora Cordell Eshleman. Died: April 10, 1996, Greencastle, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Kathryn C. Cline Eshleman; children: Lavonne Ward, Kathleen Forney, Margaret Baer, John E., Roger; brother and sister: Charles, Elizabeth Martin; 9 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: April 14, Marion Mennonite Church, by Alvin Kanagy and Cleon Nyce.

Gingerich, Thelma E. Harshberger, 50, New Paris, Ind. Born: Oct. 20, 1945, Newton, Kan., to Wilbur and Sarah Anderson Harshberger. Died: April 19, 1996, Goshen, Ind., of a heart attack. Survivors—husband: Ivan Gingerich; children: Sharon, Rose Bickel, Mark; brother and sisters: Leroy Harshberger, Doreen Welsh, Amy Abramson, Janet Stutzman, Mary Yoder, Lydia Miller. Funeral: April 22, North Goshen Mennonite

Church, by Russel Krabill, Art Smoker, and Harvey Chupp. Burial: Miller 8 Square Cemetery.

Herr, Esther R. Buchen, 77, Lititz, Pa. Born: April 5, 1919, Farmersville, Pa., to Landis and Clara Rutt Buchen. Died: April 18, 1996, Manheim, Pa. Survivors—children: Alvin K., Dora H. Brubaker, Rosene K. Martin, Linda M. Auker; brothers and sisters: Kenneth, Caleb, and Curvin Buchen, Vera Weaver, Clara Sauder, Thelma Sauder, Elizabeth Landis, Rhoda Leaman, Lois Kautz, Laverne Peifer; 10 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Parke K. Herr (husband). Funeral: April 22, Lititz Mennonite Church, by J. Clair Hollinger and Dennis Ernest. Burial: Hess Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Herr, Mary Harnish, 94, Born: April 17, 1902, Pequea Twp., Pa., to Enos and Katie Herr Harnish. Died: April 19, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—children: J. Donald, Harold H., Robert, Jay M. Miller, Grace H. Grayill, Mary Catherine Wenger, Martha E. Myer, Lois W. Lowe, Miriam Kreider, Pat Eby; sister: Catherine H. Siegrist; 30 grandchildren, 62 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Frank M. Herr (husband). Congregational membership: Risser Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 23, Millersville Mennonite Church, by Ben Esbach, Ralph Ginder, and David Hess. Burial: Millersville Cemetery.

Johnson, Arthur Stevenson, 87, Stuarts Draft, Va. Born: Jan. 30, 1909, Hansboro, N.D., to John William Franklin and Della Stevenson Johnson. Died: April 20, 1996, Fishersville, Va. Survivors—wife: Rhoda Layman Johnson; children: Alice Falls, Anna Dettwiler, Ruby, Ruth Duncan, Susan Poole, Dorothy, Daniel, Samuel; brother and sisters: Charles Henry, Leota Alice Parslow, Edna Katherine Rosenburger; 11 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: April 25, Springdale Mennonite Church, by Richard Showalter, Ralph Martin, and Mark Wenger.

Knepp, Wallace K., 62, Iowa City, Iowa. Born: June 8, 1933, Johnson County, Iowa, to John and Maryann Rhodes Knepp. Died: April 19, 1996, Iowa City, Iowa. Survivors—wife: Wilma Swartzendruber Knepp; children: Laura Burns, Sandra, Charlotte, Thomas; brothers: Clayton, Cleo, John; one grandchild. Funeral and burial: April 22, East Union Mennonite Church, by Noah Helmuth.

Kniss, Lizzie V. Kaufman, 90, Johnstown, Pa. Born: June 12, 1905, Conemaugh Twp., Pa., to Loranza and Annie Swank Kaufman. Died: April 27, 1996, Johnstown, Pa. Survivors—brothers: Harley and Paul Kaufman. Predeceased by: Paul Kniss (husband). Funeral and burial: May 1, Stahl Mennonite Church, by Mary Grace Shenk and Harold Shenk.

Kulp, Francis B., 76, Harleysville, Pa. Born: Feb. 19, 1920, Skippack Twp., Pa., to Francis L. and Sallie Blank Kulp. Died: April 18, 1996, Souderton, Pa., of renal failure. Survivors—wife: Kathryn A. Moyer Kulp; children: Mary Jane Godshall, Martha Jean Weaver, Francis Larry, John David; brother and sister: Clarence B., Katie B. Landis; 11 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral and burial: April 28, Salford Mennonite Church, by James C. Longacre, Craig Morton, John Ruth, and Willis Miller.

Miller, Theda F. Lambright, 47, Topeka, Ind. Born: Oct. 27, 1948, LaGrange County, Ind., to Melvin J. and Nancy A. Miller Lambright. Died: March 26, 1996, Topeka, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Eli J. Miller; daughters: Janice Hochstetler, Beth Ann Austin; brother and sisters: Michael Lambright, Zoann Beachy, Judy Beachy; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: March 29, First Mennonite Church, by Joe Slabach and John F. Murray. Burial: Grace Lawn Cemetery.

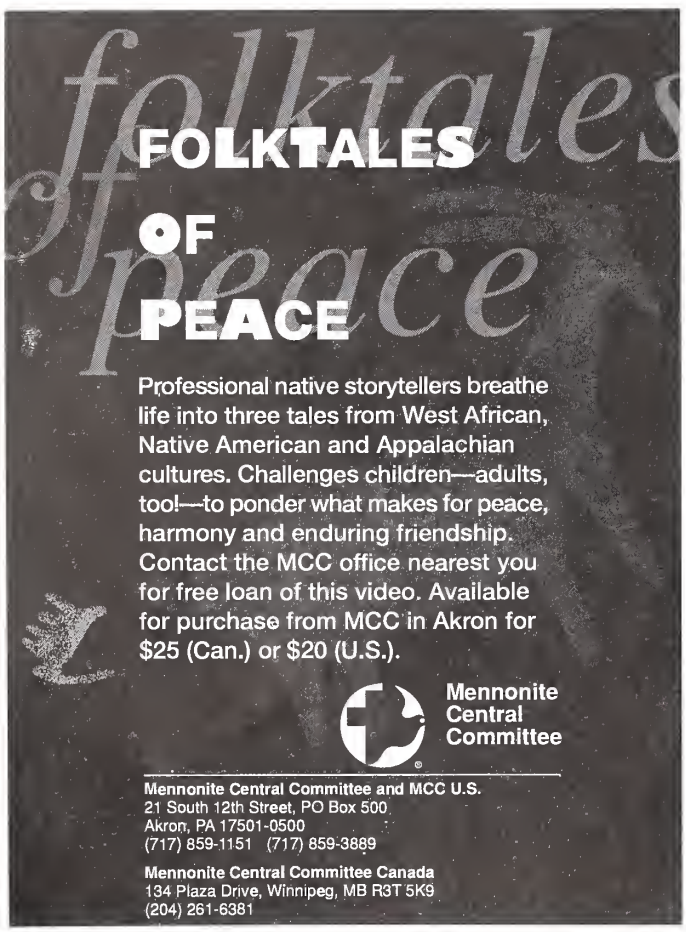
Moyer, Richard G., 83, Harleysville, Pa. Born: Dec. 16, 1912, Morwood, Pa., to Harry S. and Sallie S. Godshall Moyer. Died: April 19, 1996, Harleysville, Pa., of a stroke. Survivors—wife: Kathryn W. Hendricks Moyer; children: Ronald H., Carol E. Miller, Shriley A. Fox, Nancy J. Histand; brothers and sisters: Norman G., Harold G., Ella G. Detweiler, Esther G. Bechtel, Ada G. Delp; 14 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Stanley L. and Dennis G. (sons). Funeral: April 24, Peter Becker Community, by Gerald A. Clemmer and Earl D. Yoder. Burial: Souderton Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Moyer, Sadie M. Stover, 90, Harleysville, Pa. Born: Durlin, Pa., to Milton F. and Amanda Moyer Stover. Died: April 19, 1996, Sarasota, Fla., of a stroke. Survivors—children: Cleta S. Freed, Merrill S.; 7 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Willis B. Moyer (husband). Funeral and burial: April 22, Salford Mennonite Church, by James C. Longacre and Willis Miller.

Nofziger, Clifford E., 81, Wauseon, Ohio. Born: Aug. 6, 1914, Fulton County, Ohio, to Moses and Ida Nofzinger Nofziger. Died: April 6, 1996, Fulton County, Ohio, of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Edna Blough Eash Nofziger; children: Denver, Dean, Delores Smith, Donelda Richer; stepchildren: Sanford and Duane Eash, Mary Ellen Kempf, Ruth Klopfenstein; brother and sisters: Daryl, Kathryn Short, Ilva Grieser, Bernice Rufenacht; 12 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, 5 step great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Irene Short Nofziger (first wife). Memorial service: April 9, North Clinton Mennonite Church, by Gary Blosser. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Peters, Russell, 90. Born: Nov. 27, 1906, England, by William and Ethel Rowe Peters. Died: April 29, 1996, New Hamburg, Ont. Survivors—children: Donald, Gloria Richardson; 7 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ida Good Peters (wife). Funeral and burial: May 1, Nith Valley Mennonite Church, by Harold Schilk.

Reist, David H., 50, Jacksonville, Fla. Born: Nov. 16, 1945, Premont, Tex., to Robert and Ruth Sieber Reist. Died: April 19, 1996, Jacksonville, Fla., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Donna Cyphers Reist; children: R. Peter, Laura; brothers and sister: John, Kurt, Susan Mast. Congregational membership: Emmanuel Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 24, Hardage-Giddens Funeral Home, by Heidi Regier Kreider. Cremated—ashes buried at Mandarin Cemetery.



Shore, Kody Scott, 2, Telford, Pa. Born: Oct. 6, 1993, Telford, Pa., to Tobin Scott and Joylynn Souder Shore. Died: April 19, 1996, Telford, Pa., of histiocytosis. Funeral and burial: April 24, Salford Mennonite Church, by James C. Longacre and Craig Morton.

Snavely, J. Warren, 87, Manheim, Pa. Born: Jan. 2, 1909, Lancaster County, Pa., to Joseph B. and Jennie B. Ramsey Snavely. Died: April 5, 1996, Manheim, Pa. Survivors—wife: D. Marie Eshleman Snavely; children: Marian R. Nolt, Joanne Kreiser, Linda S. Keener, Herbert W.; 13 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 10, Lititz Mennonite Church, by Dennis W. Ernest, Jacob W. Frederick, and J. Clair Hollinger. Burial: Hammer Creek Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Stroup, Howard A., 69, Goshen, Ind. Born: April 6, 1927, Michigan City, Ind., to Harry and Tillie Harker Stroup. Died: April 11, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Ruth Miller Stroup; children: Joyce, Laura Batten, Kevin, David: 4 grandchildren. Congregational membership: North Goshen Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: April 13, Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens, by Art Smoker.

Troyer, Fannie Bontrager, 90, Hutchinson, Kan. Born: July 11, 1905, Haven, Kan., to Andrew F. and Fannie Bontrager. Died: April 21, 1996, South Hutchinson, Kan. Survivors—children: Charles, Richard, Mark, Mary Edith Horst, Irene Gawenda, Leroy, Lester; brothers and sisters: Andrew, David, and Enos Bontrager, Mary Miller, Anna Yoder, Edna Yoder, Mattie Gingerich, Ida Schrock. Predeceased by: Oliver J. Troyer (second husband) and Ammon E. Troyer (first husband). Funeral: April 21, South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, by Howard Wagler and Dan Kauffman. Burial: Yoder Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Wyse, Rosella, 87, Archbold, Ohio. Born: April 23, 1909, Fulton County, Ohio, to Elmer and Ella Wyse. Died: April 28, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivor—brother: Ervin E. Funeral: April 30, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman and Charles Gautsche. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Yoder, Amanda Schrock, 81, Middlebury, Ind. Born: Nov. 8, 1914, LaGrange County, Ind., to Andrew and Anna Yoder Schrock. Died: March 26, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Mahlon Yoder; stepchildren: Miriam Heath, Galen Yoder; brother and sisters: David Schrock, Sarah Bontrager, Lydia Borntrager. Funeral: March 28, First Mennonite Church, by Joe Slabach, Ron Adams, and Crist Borntrager. Burial: South Union Cemetery.

Yoder, Delila, 84, Pryor, Okla. Born: May 1, 1911, Hydro, Okla., to Joni A. and Susan Miller Yoder. Died: March 23, 1996, Pryor, Okla. Survivors—children: Albert, Eli, Alva, Joni; brother and sisters: Alva Yoder, Barbara Thomas, Lizzie Chupp, Susan Yoder, 14 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jonas Yoder (husband). Funeral and burial: March 27, Zion Mennonite Church, by Duey Matthews.

Yoder, Gladys Virginia Brunk, 84, Pryor, Okla. Born: Aug. 26, 1911, LaJunta, Colo., to John M. and Anna E. Rhodes Brunk. Died: April 8, 1996, Tulsa, Okla. Survivors—husband: Tillman Yoder; children: Lee, Anita Stevens; 7 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Funeral and burial: April 10, Zion Mennonite Church, by Duey Matthews.

Yoder, Henry J., 87, Davidsville, Pa. Born: Sept. 25, 1908, Somerset County, Pa., to John and Polly Custer Yoder. Died: April 25, 1996, Johnstown, Pa. Survivors—wife: Ruth Saylor Yoder; children: Betty, Carlton; brothers: Herbert, David, John; 4 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: April 28, Blough Mennonite Church, by Richard Mininger.

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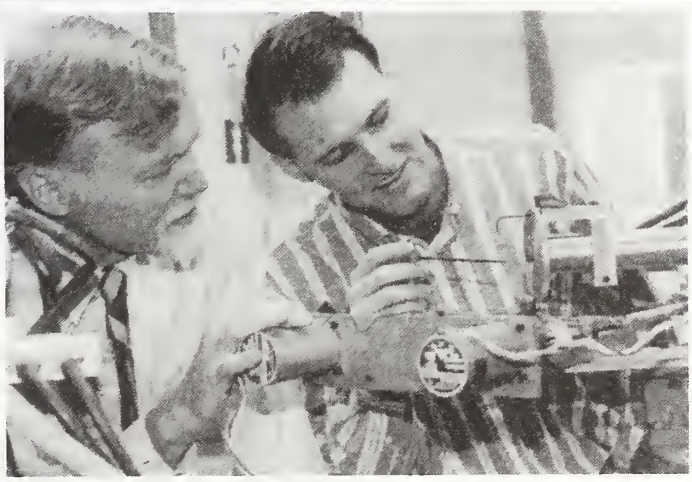

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Living with ambiguity (1):

Life, it seems, is mostly grays

The way some people see it, Mennonites are a people who mostly disagree. Bring up any issue of faith and practice, and you'll likely have an argument. Some ask: is there anything about which we don't fight?

There is.

I happened onto one by accident at a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Mennonite Church General Board (MCGB) last month. During a banquet at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, conversation at our table of eight turned to politics. Eventually we asked: Should Mennonite Christians vote?

We took a poll. Three of us had never voted—and likely never will. The other five vote, though three do so without much conviction.

Next question: why has this issue not divided the church? It surely could. The two of our eight who were passionate about voting grew up in Mennonite congregations that had sermons admonishing good Christians to be good citizens by voting. Others in the group remembered sermons about keeping ourselves unspotted from the world—including politics.

We could surely prooftext either position. Scriptures like Matt. 22:21, Rom. 12:1-2, Rom. 13:1-7, and 2 Pet. 2:13-15 are favorites in discussions on involvement in society. We've used them in other lifestyle arguments, e.g., if we should pay "war taxes." But, for some reason, on whether Mennonites should vote we have chosen not to fight. We have agreed to disagree.

That is also the route Virginia Mennonite Conference has taken in relation to the subject of this week's *Gospel Herald*: military personnel and church membership. At a special session last January, Virginia delegates said: "Loyalty to the military oath is incompatible with loyalty to one's covenant as a disciple of Jesus Christ." However, they also decided to stay in "full fellowship" with congregations that disagree.

Virginia has some. As Valerie Weaver notes in "Between the Rock of Peace and the Hard Place of Outreach" (page 6), some Virginia congregations find themselves with military personnel knocking on their doors. A few have chosen to admit them as members, believing they can work better with them from within than on the outside.

Virginia's decision puts a lot of faith in the congregation and its discernment process. But conference leaders believe this is the best answer for them on this issue at this time. Whether it is an answer for the entire denomination will be the subject of a consultation on military personnel and church membership scheduled by MCGB for this fall.

Whatever the decision, this will by no means end the ambiguities we face—on this issue, on many other issues of faith and practice before the church. As we have in the past, we must continue to wrestle with these questions of faithfulness, inclusion, boundaries, and freedom.

Perhaps as important, if not more important, than our answers is the process by which we come to them. Our task today is not so much solving our dilemmas as it is learning to live with our ambiguities and our paradoxes—together, in love.

Life would be so much easier if more things were either black or white, right or wrong. Then love for each other comes relatively easily. But life, it seems, turns out to be mostly grays. Our challenge is to feel and express love when we don't agree, particularly when those disagreements are about faith and its practice.

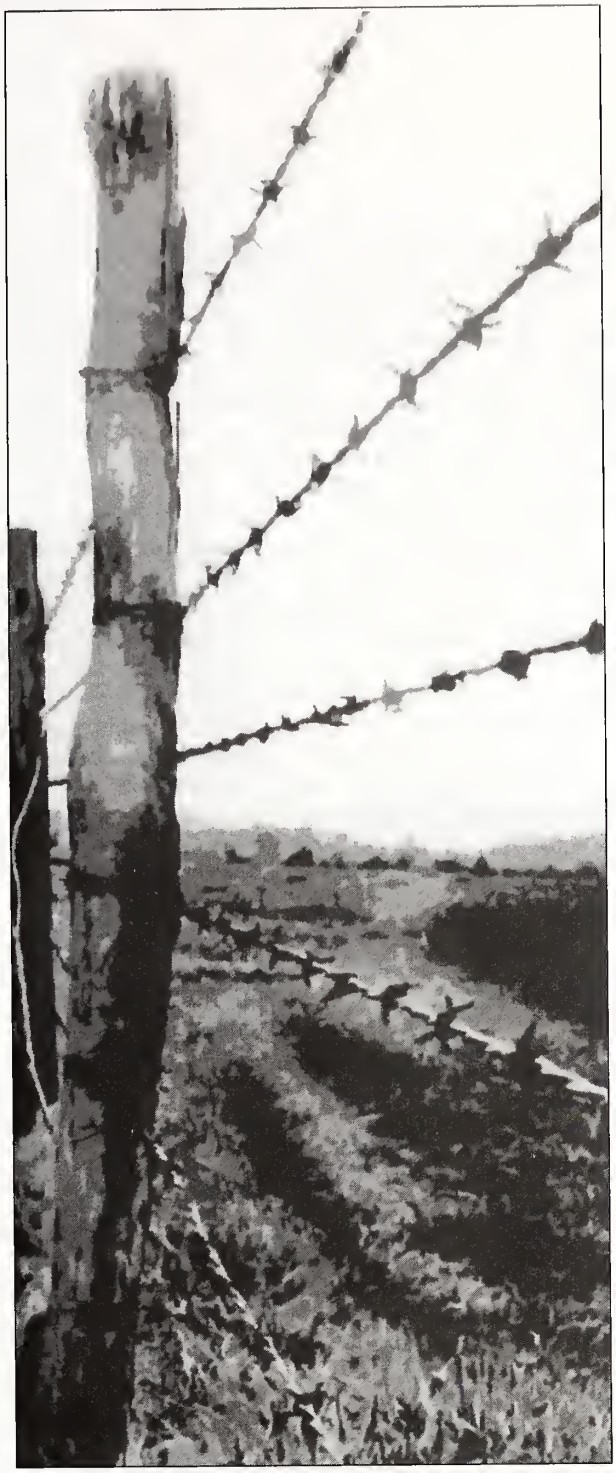
This too can become part of our witness to the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The world is full of grays, of ambiguities, of paradoxes. Simplistic answers may satisfy for a time. But many nonbelievers are rightly suspicious of believers who have an air of having it all together on all things all the time.

How much better to be examples of living with our uncertainties. To have faith in God and not in our own solutions. To embrace our discomfort with grayness, knowing it is the way to growth. To be willing to listen and learn from each other as together we explore God's truth.

But, most of all, the world needs to see us do all this with the "greatest of these." It needs to see us work through our grays with love.—*jlp*

This is the first of three editorials on living with ambiguity. Next week: "Are There Then No Boundaries?"

May 28, 1996



Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

MAY 23 '96 ... LIBRARY ... SEMINARIES

When to build fences and when to open the gates

Some come to our churches for room to breath. Others come because we have the courage to take a stand. Any wonder we have disagreements about boundaries?

by Ruth Detweiler Lesher

People in the church today are at very different places in their needs for boundaries. This is true both for individuals and as a group. Some of us want the fences to be firm and erect. Others of us want the gates flung wide open. Most of us want boundaries sometimes and open doors at others. So today we in the church are in the process of discerning when each needs to happen.

The early church too dealt with the same issue. Some biblical scholars have identified three stages of early church life in relation to boundaries:

1. Laws and exclusivity. When the church began, it was predominately Jewish Christian. Vigorous debates occurred in the Jerusalem Council, and the Pauline teaching in Romans and Galatians urges Jewish Christians to loosen the ethical requirements or boundaries so as to include Gentile Christians in the church. Circumcision, which was the sign of membership with the people of God, was replaced by baptism in Christ—the symbol and ritual of membership into the community of faith. Circumcision was not simply discarded because of its exclusiveness; rather, the church claimed a

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Harold N. Miller:
'Following the peace'—one person's journey toward intimacy with God . . 6

Mennonite Mutual Aid board approves investments options 9

MDS to help rebuild church destroyed by arsonists 10

Authority means knowing where to put the fences so there is enough space and freedom so that eventually the boundaries will no longer be needed.

new ritual to define a particular community—the followers of Jesus. Anyone could follow and join this community.

2. Freedom and grace. The second stage of the early church in relation to boundaries was one in which those who were thrilled to be free of the legalism of the Torah touted that freedom. Some were arrogant in spirit. Those who learned that their salvation no longer came from obedience to the law, but through Christ, expressed a sense of superiority in this knowledge. They were the enlightened ones—the truly free. The response to the issue of whether to eat meat that was offered to idols illustrates this stage. Worship was to be exclusive to God, yet anything God created could be eaten.

3. Forgetting identity. Some scholars would say that Ephesians addressed the early church in its third stage: a church that had existed for awhile and had begun to forget its origins and its identity. Ephesians is not an appeal to Jewish Christians in stage one to accept the Gentile Christians on equal footing in Christ, nor is there an effort to tone down the Gentile arrogance toward Jews for their newfound freedom. Here the writer tries to help the Gentile readers appreciate the greatness of their salvation by setting it in the historical context of Israel's former place of privilege and their Gentile exclusion. The point is not to return to the laws and practices of the Jews, nor to diminish the grace and freedom found in Christ. Salvation, however, does not take place in a vacuum. Salvation has a history. In experiencing the joy of this newfound faith in Christ, Christians will now be tested in how they find their place alongside other believers who have different historical routes.

I am part of a generation of Mennonites that have some of the same issues as these congregations in Asia Minor at the end of the first century. Take, for example, the stories that circulate about the "bishop era" among Mennonites these days. Or there is the way we talk about the more conservative churches still among us.

Unfortunately, I feel and think like an enlightened snob sometimes. I wonder how "they" can continue to preach or teach or believe that way. At the same time I have a growing appreciation for the sense of community that seems a little more intact in some more conservative congregations. I also want church leaders to be active, present, and involved in providing guidance. I get weary of the endless processing when "priesthood of believers" means that everyone must also be an administrator.

No, I am not asking for a return to the austere aspects of being plain, or to preoccupation with the details of women's clothing, or to the leaving of all lifestyle decisions to the interpretations of a few men. But a vacuum of leadership and the inability of a community to trust male or female leadership with conviction has other kinds of problems.

I've also observed this in the office in which I practice as a psychologist. I have watched what happens across the generations of families who have operated with different styles of authority in their home. Dominating, controlling, and intrusive authority exercised in families or communities breeds blind trust, distrust, and dependence. It erodes the individual's capacity to think for him or herself. It prevents the development of autonomy, competence, and confidence.

Some families operate with an overcontrolling or authoritative style quite apart from the church's style of leadership. Sometimes the parents want the church to reinforce their excessive control. The members of this family may adopt the same style, or they may discover the love or grace of God in a rather miraculous way.

The next generation may then be so determined to give this love and grace that they have found—and so reluctant to set boundaries or say no—their children feel overwhelmed with all they have to sort through to know how to live. The freedom that children have been given stymies them in the opposite way.

As a Mennonite community, we may be in the stage of having loosened our boundaries considerably—for good reasons. But some may say we have lost our criteria for membership altogether. Sociologists like Robert Bell in *Habits of the Heart* tell us that when membership criteria for a community are lost, the identity of the community dissolves as well. Working at the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* is a timely opportunity to review and reestablish our community identity and membership criteria.

But a congregation's needs for establishing or loosening boundaries is complicated by having families within it who are at very different stages in regard to their needs for authority and limits. Some families come to our congregations for some room to breathe and for God's healing love and grace. Others come to our

church because we are one of the few who still have the courage to take a stand on some Christian lifestyle matters.

Some of us painfully need to experience the loving and accepting arms of God. Some of us seek people who have the courage to stand with us on some matters of faith. Some want help to raise families with values very different from the world around us. Some have with joy discovered how big God is and have celebrated that so long that they are losing track of themselves.

And the pastor is to discern just how much grace and how much accountability each of us wants and needs!

We know there can be problems with boundaries that are too rigid and authority that is controls too much. But perhaps we need to also gain a new appreciation for the benefits of setting limits.

My husband, Emerson, and I were visiting some friends who had recently moved to a Navajo reservation in New Mexico. We drove through what seemed like endless pasture land. There were no fences or natural tree boundaries or crop boundaries. After arriving at the hogan of our friends, we stood outside to catch the last few moments of a gorgeous sunset and gasped at this grand expanse of creation.

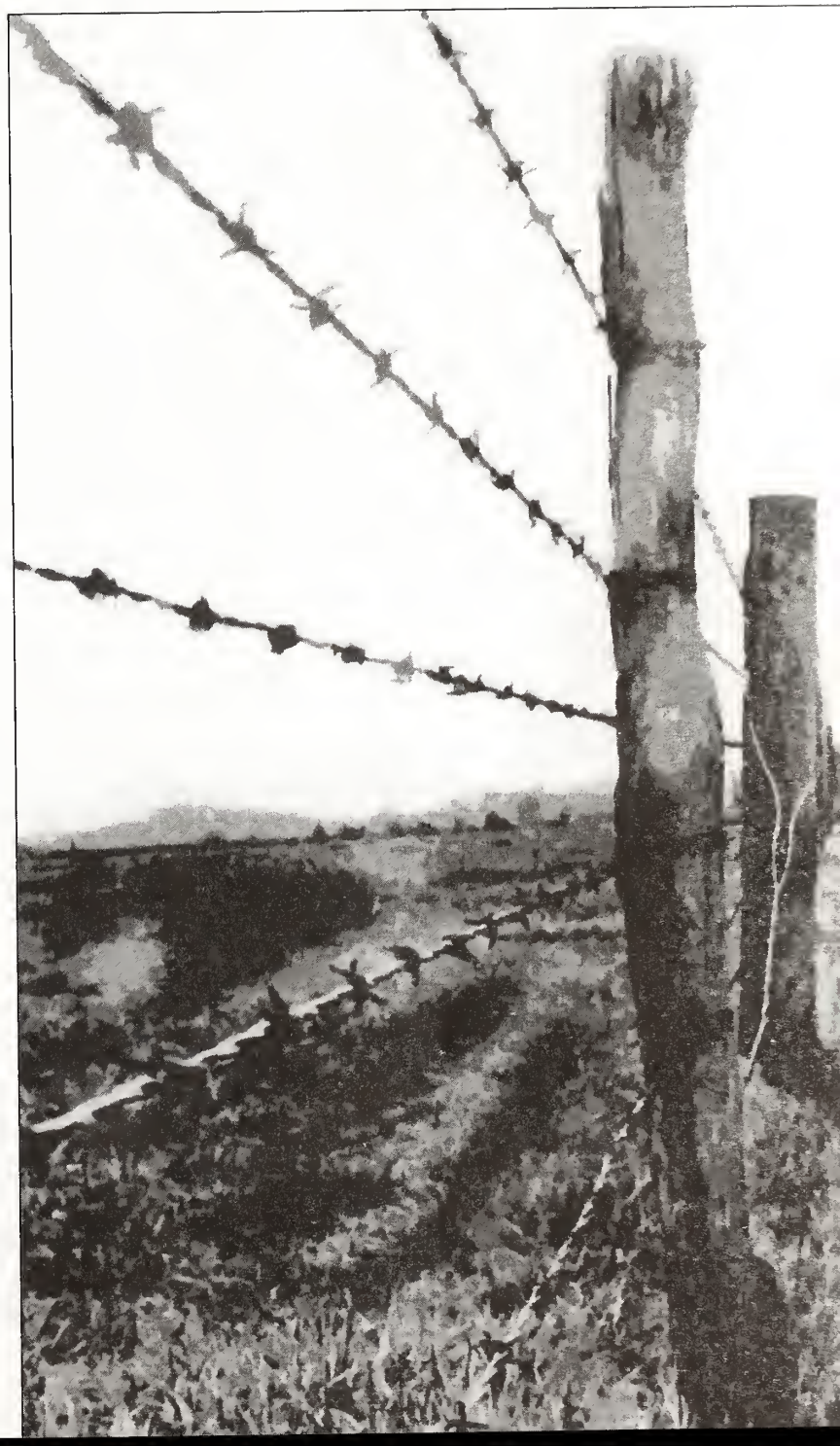
Our friends told us that one of the first things they had to do was to build a fence for their children. The reason was not to keep out stray dogs, horses, or rabbits. They built a fence because the children felt uncomfortable when they stepped out of the house without knowing how far they could go to play. Without a boundary like a fence, they were not free. The fence gave them the comfort they needed to play.

The comfort a child feels from clear boundaries and limits is something that I have also learned from my counseling clients. They need to know the boundaries and parameters of the therapy relationship. One client's first words to me in the hospital were, "You won't touch me, will you? Don't touch me." Touch in her past had turned to sexual abuse and still reminded her of that.

I hear many stories in my office from persons who have been scarred for life because there were no clear boundaries to provide safety from physical or sexual abuse. Sometimes the lack of boundaries meant that there was no direction or guidance given for life. Sometimes it was that there was no privacy in bathrooms or bedrooms. Sometimes the boundary problem was that the roles of the parents were no different from the children; the children began functioning like the parent or spouse. This can create significant mental confusion. A basic requirement for a healthy family is clarity with roles and boundaries.

It is within the limits and boundaries that

(continued on page 8)



"There are a variety of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."
—1 Cor. 12:6-7, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Making the Penultimate Too Often Important Leads to Violence (Apr. 23) is an attempt to play a "safe" language game about God. The article founds its argument for liberal tolerance on a liberal narrative which assumes a difference between our traditions and God. But the writer is no more liberal than anybody else in making ultimate his own belief system about God: "God loves all people."

In making such an assertion, the author may well be himself "subordinating God's sovereignty to his own." He could at least be more truthful about whether he is a universalist.

In the article, Ted Grimsrud attempts to keep his language safely ambiguous, but he never tells what it means for God to love all. Does it mean all, whether they follow Jesus or not?

In Luke 4:25-29, Jesus said there were many widows but Elijah was sent to only one, and there were many lepers, but Elisha cleansed only one. "When they heard this . . . all were filled with rage." Jesus' listeners were offended, not by the particularism of Jesus, but that his particularism included foreigners and excluded them.

In John 6, Jesus says that all that the Father gives him will come to him and that "no one can come to me unless drawn by the Father." Again, many were offended and turned away.

If we avoid mystical ambiguity and acknowledge our attachment to truth, this may lead to our martyrdom. If Jesus had not been so convinced of who he was and of his word about the kingdom, he could have avoided the provocations which led to violence against him.

But what is the ultimate truth advocated by this article? "God's genuine temple is the human being." No confrontation with the claims of Jesus here. "Each person of faith . . ." Which faith? Which tradition? "Human hearts that trust in God's mercy. . . ." Again, this is not exactly an encounter with Christology or with Christ (since liberals assume that difference).

Can we in our sovereignty rule out the possibility that God is able to reveal for certain that he will destroy some on the last day? Is our sovereignty so important that we will insist on making God's love hostage to our liberal notions of freedom? Does the sovereignty of God mean that God is free to possibly reverse what he has revealed to us about following Jesus?

These questions are perhaps not nearly important enough or safe enough for your publication. But then I ask, why do you think that "God loves all" is so non-offensive? Are we genuinely willing to take seriously, as the early Anabaptists did, the idea that those outside our tradition of following Jesus have not been loved by God the same way we have been?

Of course, that was then and this is now. Now we are too gentle and humble to get ourselves martyred. After all, martyrdom gets in the way of being good parents, spouses, and voting citizens. Ambiguous words like "God" and "peace" and "justice" are more comfortable.

Mark McCulley
Ephrata, Pa.

One Small Candle (Apr. 30). So you were impressed that the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, included Mennonites on his list of churches opposed to the revision of the Endangered Species Act.

In 1947 I hitchhiked to Oregon to become a lumberjack for a summer in order to pay for my expenses at Hesston (Kan.) College. I landed in Sweet Home and then spent my days walking slippery logs and setting chokers around the six-foot logs. Several times I came close to being "endangered" myself.

That's when I also learned about lumbering and the spotted owl. Today, million of wage earners and their families are being affected because of the Endangered Species Act that tries to preserve the spotted owl. Because this owl has become almost a shrine for some politicians, millions in Oregon are feeling the pinch because they cannot go after the lumber that sustains them.

Today rain forests are being raped in Central America and South America—rain forests with their trees that will never be replaced. Meanwhile, conscientious persons are replanting trees by the millions in many parts of North America. The spotted owl will survive if we allow Oregonians to harvest their lumber and give them back their jobs in doing so.

Norman Teague
Linville, Va.

A Case for Laryngitis (May 7). I find it interesting, and more than a little disingenuous, that the assistant editor of *Gospel Herald* should have the temerity to issue a call for silence within the Mennonite Church. Week after week *Gospel Herald* contributes 16 pages of words to the ongoing discussion of issues confronting this denomination, including a back-page editorial which affords the editors an unrivaled platform for churchwide publication of their personal opinions 50 times a year.

Valerie Weaver calls for "institutional laryngitis" to quell the cacophony of contradictory voices which threaten the unity of the denomination. She notes that "some in the Mennonite Church are ready to leave because theologies seem too dissonant and lifestyles too incompatible." She is either unaware or unconcerned that the theologies some find "dissonant" others find heretical. And many see those "incompatible" lifestyles as sinful behavior seeking recognition and acceptance.

The problem is not so much with the number of voices being raised as with the lack of clarity in the voices of our leaders who should be guiding us through the morass of conflicting ideas and interpretations. The situation is further complicated when "the weekly magazine of the Mennonite Church" arbitrarily limits debate to one side of an issue (e.g., women in leadership), cuts off debate altogether (e.g., homosexuality), or publicizes events which advance a perspective directly in conflict with the denomination's official position (e.g., ***Dancing at the Table*** . . . , Jan. 9).

If the discussion within the Mennonite Church concerned matters such as mode of baptism or styles of worship, I might agree that a period of silence would be in order. But the issues provoking such spirited interaction arise from radically different presuppositions and diametrically opposed perspectives on the nature of revelation and the character of truth.

As long as our leadership tolerates—and even contributes to—discourse marked by ambiguity, equivocation, and error, confusion will reign. Sheep need shepherds who know where they are going. Lacking such, they wander all over the landscape, bleating plaintively, until they stumble into a ravine. Give us leaders who say what they mean and mean what they say, and the cacophony which threatens our unity will eventually cease, one way or another.

Eric A. Kouns
Harrisonburg, Va.

I appreciate the truth found in Ted Grimsrud's article, ***Making the Penultimate Too Important Often Leads to Violence*** (Apr. 23), though his exact point was somewhat vague. He spoke of being against violence which I wholeheartedly agree with. However, what he seemed to be saying about boundaries could be quite disturbing.

Grimsrud spent a considerable space trashing "structures, rules, doctrines, and principles" by implying they are "violent." I disagree. I agree that "rules" that are man-made could only be evil and violent because of man's fallen nature, but rules and principles that are clear and consistent commands of Scripture are to be followed, even if other people say they are violent.

For example, if someone is sexually impure, it is not violent to try to persuade them from their sin, because to rescue someone from God's wrath is an act of compassion. Also, Jesus Christ and his apostles mentioned many rules, doctrines, and principles in the Scriptures, many of which do not appear to be loving or compassionate. The love and compassion of God are mingled equally and inextricably with God's wrath and righteousness.

Grimsrud further states, "God's priority is for humans to find healing and know love." Again, I disagree. God's overwhelming number one priority is that God should be glorified. *That* is what is ultimate. When humans "find healing and know love," then God will be glorified. God-centered structures can help us truly know the love of God, but if we disregard the clear commands of the Bible in favor of a pop-psychology love, then God is not glorified, the ultimate is ignored, and we are in grave danger of knowing God's wrath.

Lowell Stoltzfus
Minneapolis, Minn.

High School Students Ask 'What Is Enough?' (May 7). It is refreshing to hear about high school students discussing this question. It's one that confronts us every day as we work among Mennonites here in East Africa. We hope that God's working in the youth of our church will encourage all of us as the body of Christ to confront the tremendous inequities of wealth and privilege within our church and within our world.

In *World Health Forum* (1995), Maurice King and Charles Eliott write: "We have always been letting sick children die. Money spent on a cup of coffee, which might have been contributed to OXFAM or UNICEF, lets sick children die."

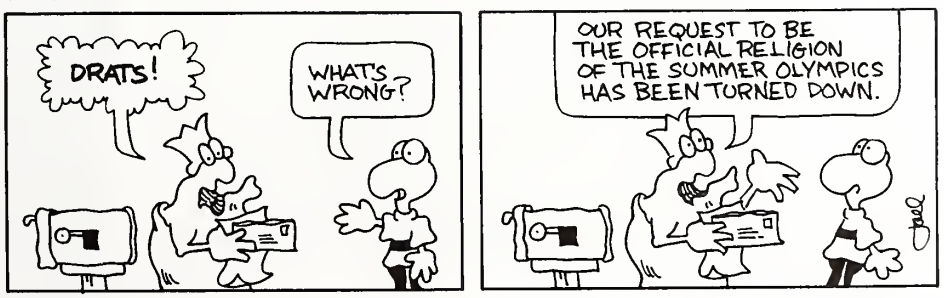
We were also challenged by the report, ***Mennonites Divert Taxes from War to Health***, in the same issue. Thanks for reporting these two justice issues!

Stan and Susan Godshall
Shirati, Tanzania

Me, Myself, and I (May 14). You hit the nail on the head when you said that society focuses on things that are contrary to Scripture. I find it hard enough to fight the flesh, and society doesn't help one bit. Praise God we have the church to help us, if we allow ourselves to be held accountable. We must also allow for discipline in order to keep the desires of the flesh from overcoming our spirits.

Gary Krabill
Mifflintown, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle



How my God met me (8):

'Following the peace'—one person's journey

Rather than giving up when I fail to hear God accurately, I have a renewed desire to spend more time with God and heighten my ability to hear God's voice.

by Harold N. Miller

This morning God again gave me an astounding choice: Either I can throughout my day grow more intimate with God, or I can choose acts that ignore God.

Each time I sense God's Spirit nudging me toward an action or attitude (through a Bible passage, a Christian friend, a circumstance, or a thought), I am experiencing the reality of God interacting with me.

I want this intimacy with God out of selfishness—I want to tap God's counsel, power, goodness. I want a friend who will never leave me. But, incredibly, this intimacy also delivers me from selfishness because I'm communing with someone who loves the whole world, and that love for everybody and this planet rubs off on me.

I first became aware of walking with God during my first semester at Bible school. I was seventeen, shy, and had two socially embarrassing personal problems which I fervently wanted to overcome. I spent much time in a prayer room crying my heart out to God, using all the techniques of prayer I knew, including weekly fasts. While in the prayer room a sense of God's presence would settle over me: deep peace and joy and a sense that my very being was in harmony with the universe. On leaving the room, the sense would remain until at some thought or action—which I now believe typically fell in the areas of anxiety or pride—it would evaporate almost instantly. Slowly I learned which actions are of the Spirit of God and which are not.

Another significant segment of my journey toward intimacy with God was the Saturdays I spent as a rural mail carrier the first several years of my pastorate. While driving between mailboxes, plagued with insecurity and lack of self-confidence about the next day's sermon, I often asked God to fill me with the Spirit as I ministered to people's needs. As I delivered the mail, I chose not to look at the advertisements that use sex to sell and kept the popular radio turned off because those mediums filled me with thoughts and feelings that crowded out my sense of God's Spirit. And I needed to hear God for the next day. Those times on the mail route became very fertile for me spiritually. I seemed to find a knack for wisdom—still of a stumbling variety, but more than before.

Soon I yearned for yet more: if I could be taught by God and flow with God one day a week, why not seven? At the end of one of my days on the mail route, I wrote, "What thoughts keep me from you on Sunday—no, all week?" All of a sudden I experienced it: an inner surge, goose bumps, a deep rearranging of my priorities and orientation. I found myself filled with an unusually intense love, and I never want to lose that vision.

When we yearn for intimacy with God more than for immediate pleasures, we begin to obey God consistently enough to have a more constant sense of God's presence. Each time we obey God's prompting, we increase the opportunity of further communion between us. It's a principle in life that, whenever we respond to something, we become more aware of it. For example, if a young father rolls over when the newborn cries but the mother gets up, soon he no longer hears the baby but she will hear its faintest whimper! As I respond to God, my sensitivity grows stronger to God's words in my mind and heart, on the pages of Scripture, or in the voice of my brother and sister. And our intimacy deepens.

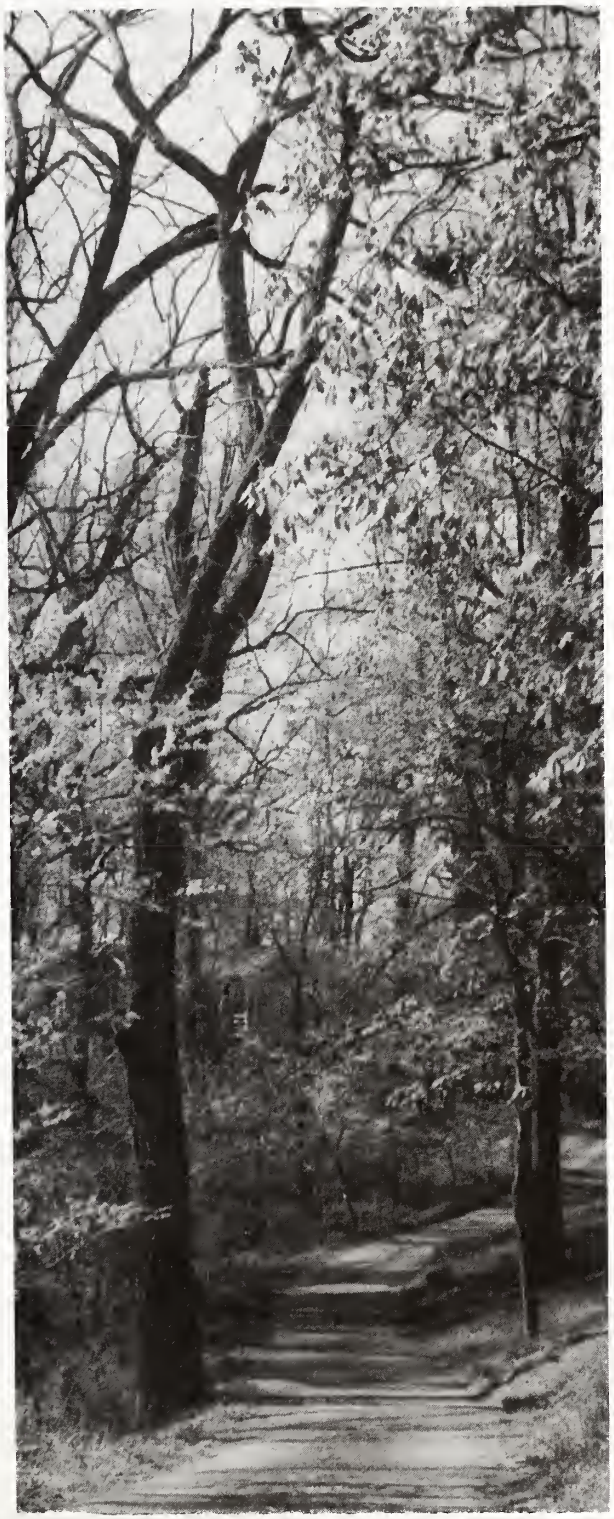
All children of God experience this communion to some extent (Rom. 8:14; John 10:27; Heb. 8:10), though not all would name it as God speaking to them. This inner witness of the Spirit's leading is admittedly mystical and hard to pin down. Even so—or perhaps because this is so—the church in Acts took steps to have new believers experience the Spirit (Acts 8:4-17; 19:1-7). A sense of the Spirit in my life has been the source of the deepest experience of intimacy with God, the divine embrace (Rom. 5:5), the means of assuring me that I am God's child (Rom. 8:16). Our knowledge of God's presence can be more than blind faith.

My experience of being led by the Spirit is well summarized in a phrase given to me by the Jesuit uncle of a friend: "following the peace." The signature of God's voice is an accompanying atmosphere of peace. Outwardly everything may be in turmoil, and I may have to be moving quickly, but inside there is quietness and

toward intimacy with God

confidence. God's voice may be telling me to make a change that will upset everything, but inside there is peace and harmony.

Sometimes I breathe fast and my heart pounds as the Spirit prompts me to do something, yet I sense peace. So I follow it. If I feel rushed or pushed, I'm probably filled with something other than God. Evil powers can give knowledge or inspire behavior, but they cannot counterfeit the peace of God.



This peace is the sensation that settles over us in the gathered congregation as we offer full-hearted worship and turn our gaze toward God with no distractions. On Monday morning as I am able to follow the Spirit's prompting for an extended time, I know the same sensation. Each time I obey, I experience this surge of peace.

Sometimes in my journey with God I know what God is saying to me, but I do not know how to obey. How do I develop my intimacy with God during the times I seem unable to respond as he calls? What shape does friendship with God take then?

God is beginning to show me this answer: when I am unable to obey, I am to tell God that and remember that God wants intimacy even more than I do.

During a summer sabbatical, one of my most profitable blocks of time was three days at a monastery. While there, one part of Richard Foster's book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* prodded me. The ability to pray all the time, everywhere, is strengthened when we set a regular time for prayer some time, somewhere. Making a consistent time for "devotions" is a constant struggle for me.

At the monastery I was in the midst of those who believe in the need for this regular prayer. The Benedictines have a rhythm of work and prayer—at this particular community they join for prayer at 4:45 a.m., 7 a.m., 9 a.m., 12 p.m., 3 p.m., 6:30 p.m., and 8:15 p.m. each day. The evening of my second day there, I wrote in my journal:

"The refrain going through my mind this evening is the phrase the abbot sings to open each service: 'O God, come to my assistance.' I am as a little child, dependent for rest, for guidance, for strength, and for the ability to pray. Like a little child I'm stumbling and inept in this life of prayer. But I'm growing. My heart is warmed as I write these words. I sense God will continually draw me, to cause me in my love for God to choose to be with God. 'O God, come to my assistance.' I do not have to achieve this life of prayer on my own. He will teach me and help me. As I yield to God—even when I cannot see why to obey—God will help me win the battle for setting aside regular prayer time."

I returned home from that retreat with the sense that when I don't know what to do next in

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When we yearn for intimacy with God more than for immediate pleasures, we begin to obey consistently enough to have a constant sense of God's presence.

(continued from page 7)

my walk with God, I am to tell God that, and God will show me what to do. God has helped me move toward a more fulfilling devotional life—one that happens more regularly and that is part of a love relationship rather than a religious duty. God meets me in a way unique and fitting to who I am and how I am made.

Does our ability to follow the peace to discern which way God is leading ever reach the point of infallibility? No. Even in the moments when I am sure of where God is leading, I can be mistaken. I have stepped out in areas, certain that I heard from God, only to have it soon be obvious that my actions were not of God. My ability to deceive myself and rationalize away the truth is legendary. (By hindsight I almost always see how God was trying to stop me and also how I pushed ahead because I wanted my own way so badly.)

That does not mean there is questionable value in paying attention to the Spirit within me. Fallibility is part of all human communication. Rather than giving up when I fail to hear God accurately, I respond with renewed desire to spend more time with God and heighten my ability to know God's voice.

There is one thing my fallibility does mean: humility. I must continually test my perception of God's will with the Scriptures and with other believers who also walk with God and read the Bible. I am not to always be off alone on my own private hotline to God. I make no significant decisions without the prayer and counsel of my sisters and brothers in the church. God often helps me obey through their encouragement and my accountability to them. Those without strong, committed relationships with other believers will soon be prompted by God to establish them.

But in avoiding the "just me and Jesus" syndrome, I do not want to miss out on the relationship between Jesus and me. The temptation can be to let our fellowship with the church limit our friendship with God.

No longer will a person teach a neighbor saying, "Know the Lord," because they will all know me (Heb 8:11). All of us can be intimate with God, can grow in experiencing God's words in our mind and heart, and can be God's hands and feet and voice of love for this world.

Harold N. Miller is pastor of Community Mennonite Fellowship of Corning, N.Y.

When to build fences and when to open the gates

(continued from page 3)

the child develops a sense of self—what she or he is able to do, likes to do, and can use to relate to others in the world. From external controls, the child can learn self-control. From external disciplines, the child can internalize self-discipline which results in tremendous freedom for the person later in life. The ideal is for the members of the family to know that limits can be set and kept and that space and freedom can also be given.

The challenge for church leaders is to exercise the kind of authority that puts up fences and boundaries—like confessions of faith and statements at Mennonite General Assemblies—so that those who have been baptized can have enough comfort, safety, and protection to play. On the other hand, authority also means knowing where to put the fences so there is enough space to play so that eventually the fence may no longer be needed by the ones it was first built for.

Jesus did not leave us with specific suggestions about church structures and where to draw the boundaries. In addition to baptism, a defining sign for the earliest of his followers was the Lord's Prayer, perhaps the first confession of faith. Christ came among us, suffered, and broke the bonds of death so that we might find our place inside the play yard—alongside one another in a marvelous history of salvation. May God help us discern when and where we need fences.

Ruth Detweiler Lesher is a psychologist in Lancaster and Camp Hill, Pa. She and her family attend the East Chestnut Mennonite Church in Lancaster. Last year she finished two terms on the General Board of the Mennonite Church—during which she also served as a member of the Council of Faith, Life, and Strategy. This article is taken from a meditation Lesher gave at a meeting of the General Board in April 1995.

MMA board offers international mutual fund and plans mental health summit

Chicago, Ill. (MMA)—A new international mutual fund, an investment choice for Mennonite Retirement Trust, and a mental health "summit" meeting were topics of discussion for the Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) board of directors meeting here May 2-3.

J. B. Miller, vice president of financial services, reported development work is being done to add an international fund to the MMA praxis mutual funds. The new fund will likely be available Jan. 1, 1997.

The board approved offering a choice of investments for Mennonite Retirement Trust (MRT), the retirement plan for church workers. There are now over 8,000 participants in the plan. Currently, all money invested in the plan is invested in the same way. By July 1, 1997, individual participants will have the option of allocating their retirement savings in a variety of ways they choose. For example, participants will be able to put a portion of their savings in domestic stocks, a portion in bonds, and a portion in foreign investments. A study of MRT participants in 1995 showed there is strong support for offering investment choice.

Shirley B. Yoder, vice president of operations, reported plans are underway for an autumn meeting that will bring together MMA and representatives of mental health organizations. The topic of discussion will be MMA's current mental health underwriting guidelines for health insurance plans. The goal of the meeting is to develop a set of underwriting criteria that is jointly formulated by MMA and mental health providers.

'We're going to try.' "I don't know if we can come to agreement, but we're going to try," said Yoder. "The long-term question is how different [from other insurers] can MMA afford to be?"

Considerable discussion centered on how integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church might affect MMA. Brenneman noted that MMA is integrated with about 25 denominations, not just two. "When the [Mennonite and General Conference] churches talk about integration, they leave out a lot of the people we serve," he said.

The board also discussed the idea of moving MMA plans and services into Canada. Brenneman said he has asked for guidance from the Mennonite Church General Board on how to pursue this issue.

The board agreed an initial step might be to invite a Canadian church leader to attend the board's August meetings. A portion of that time will be spent as a follow-up to the mutual aid conference held in January. The board will use the results of that conference to dream about how mutual aid concepts can be applied in practical ways in the future.

Other business. Karl Sommers, vice president of corporate planning, reported on an MMA study on community-based services for the elderly. These services are often aimed at helping older people stay in their homes and include such things as meals, home repairs, and other personal services. Focus groups are being conducted in the areas of Lancaster, Pa., northern Indiana, and central Kansas. Some board members urged MMA to also look at areas outside these traditional population centers.

Sommers said some models for providing services integrate congregations as a vital part of the system. After some discussion, board members agreed this is an important area for MMA to study.

First quarter financial reports showed MMA's total assets grew from more than $686 million to more than $703 million as of March 31, 1996.

—Steve Bowers

Sleeping mats, scared citizens. *Bujumbura, Burundi (MCC)*—Sleeping mats are distributed to women from the hills near Kibimba, Burundi. Some recipients fled their homes due to the ongoing fighting that is tearing Burundi apart. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker Susan Seitz helped arrange for purchase of mats from Burundian women's groups who made them, helping to increase the women's income. The mats were then given to destitute Burundians.

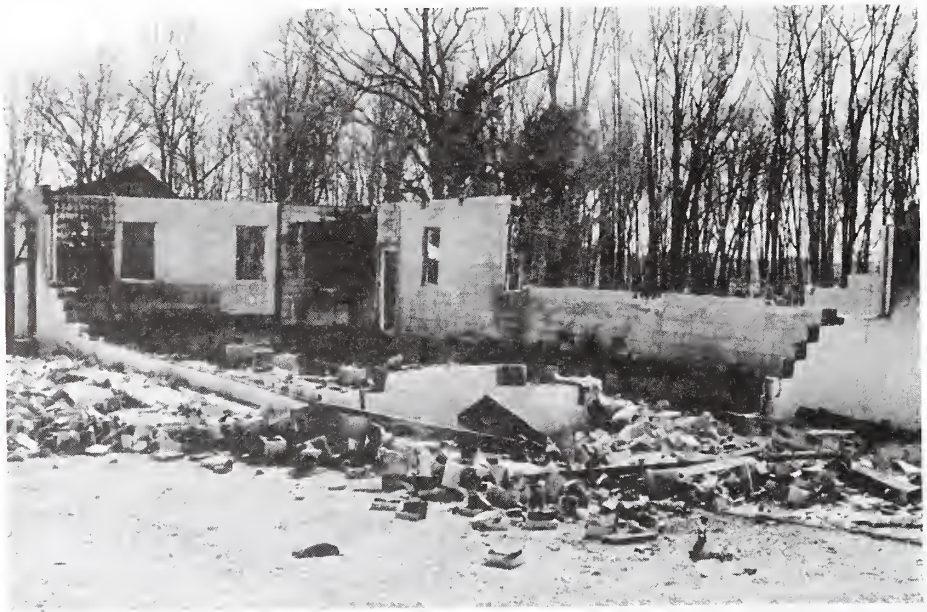
Terror continues to grip Burundi's capital. Tutsis fear rebels will attack the city, and the few Hutus left in the city are frightened they will be slaughtered by the Tutsi militia and army if a rebel attack takes place. The prime minister and others have called for arming the civilian population, which in Bujumbura is mostly Tutsi. MCC is asking for prayers for its five workers in Burundi and for the people of Burundi, particularly Christian leaders who feel they may be targets because of their ethnicity or activities in working for reconciliation. Burundians are finding creative ways to protect themselves and their families, say MCC workers. Since whole families have been massacred in the night, some disperse their children among various family members and friends so at least some may have a chance to survive. One man dressed as a woman to go to his office unrecognized. Others rotate where they spend the night. A Tutsi Roman Catholic bishop keeps an unpredictable schedule to avoid becoming a target.

Mennonite Disaster Service helps rebuild Alabama church destroyed by arsonists

Akron, Pa. (MDS)—An African-American church in Alabama burned by arsonists in January will be rebuilt this summer with the help of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), says a spokesperson for the organization.

MDS has been asked by local community leaders in Greene County, Ala., to rebuild Mount Zoar Baptist, one of three churches near the town of Boligee destroyed by arsonists this past winter, says MDS coordinator Lowell Detweiler. "Mount Zoar was selected because it had the least resources for rebuilding, including very little insurance."

Some funds for rebuilding the three churches have come to local organizations, but MDS is committed to raising the projected additional $50,000 needed for the Mount Zoar Baptist Church project. The money will be used for building materials and logistical support for the volunteers working on the project.



Fire-scorched outer walls and rubble are all that remain of the Mount Zoar Baptist church building in Greene County, Ala. The church adds to the list of over 20 African-American churches that were burned in the South in 1995. Local community leaders have asked Mennonite Disaster Service to help rebuild the structure.

Racially motivated. Over 20 African-American churches were burned in the South in the last year. Many people fear the arsons are racially motivated, partly because no local white churches were burned. Particularly suspicious to people in the area is that two of the Boligee-area churches were burned the day local newspapers reported the sentencing of two young white men for their part in a drunken rampage at three African-American churches in neighboring Sumter County two years ago.

Mennonite Disaster Service leaders and local pastors gather at the site of Mount Zoar Baptist Church (from left): Tom Smucker, Amos Miller, Ottis Mast, Arthur Coleman, pastor of the Mount Zoar congregation, and J. C. Smothers, deacon of the nearby Little Zion Baptist Church that was also destroyed by arsonists.

Greene County is about 85 percent African-American. The 1990 per capita income was $6,300, considerably less than other Alabama counties. The public schools have almost no white students—most attend a private academy.

When some MDS constituents heard about the destruction of the churches, they asked whether MDS could assist in rebuilding one of them, says Detweiler. "There was a desire to help out, to respond to an injustice."

Determining what to do. MDS leaders met a number of times with local church leaders over the past months to determine what MDS could do. "At this point it looks like this project will be the major location for the summer youth groups," says Carla Hunt, MDS personnel coordinator.

"We anticipate that each week a youth group with adult supervisors, including skilled leaders, will be assisting in this project. Over 40 youth groups have already indicated interest in working with MDS this summer. We will probably be able to accommodate about 16 of them," Hunt says. MDS is currently looking for people with building skills like masonry, bricklaying, plumbing, electrical, and heating to help out. Donations are also being accepted.

'Finding balance' tops talks at youth council

San Juan, P.R. (GCMC-MC)—"Finding Balance in Life and Ministry" was the theme for the annual Youth Ministry Council (YMC), held here April 24-28. Approximately 40 Mennonite youth ministers and church-wide personnel from Canada, the United States, and Puerto Rico attended.

The participants spent the first part of their meeting hearing reports from the youth ministers. They also heard presentations on the theme from four youth ministers. Their topics included understanding the challenges of being a woman in youth ministry, helping people intentionally set and achieve goals, working at keeping family life a priority, and recognizing that ministry needs to flow out of a relationship with Christ.

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When personnel from church agencies joined the council for the second half of its meeting, they brought a variety of agenda items for review, feedback, and decision-making. Faith & Life Press representatives from Newton, Kan., gave a "state of the publisher" address about the current financial position and the reason for recent staff cutbacks.

Other agenda items included a report from Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa., a discussion of a youth mission video, and the adoption of racism as a theme at next year's Youth Ministry Council in Orlando, Fla.

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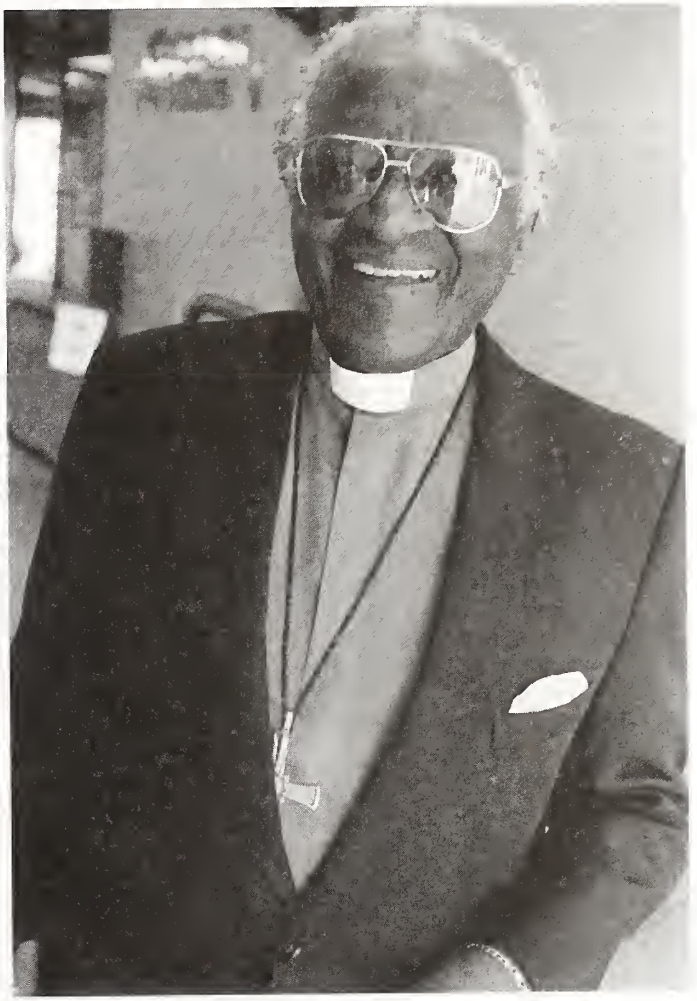
A highlight for the group was a day-long trip to several Mennonite communities outside of San Juan. The group visited the Mennonite Conference office and hospital in Aibonito, and La Plata, the area where the first Mennonites in Puerto Rico lived.

During a worship service led by Puerto Rican Mennonite youth, the council participants were introduced to Spanish songs of faith; in turn, the group sang "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" for their hosts. The singing was followed by a commissioning service in which local youth anointed and prayed for the youth ministers.

—*Carol Duerksen*

Truth commission begins work. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Mennonite Central Committee is sending Archbishop Desmond Tutu, chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a letter signed by former MCC workers in southern Africa expressing support and prayers for the commission's work. "Archbishop Tutu has been a faithful friend to MCC in southern Africa over the years, gracious and encouraging of our presence in the region. We wish to return the encouragement," explains Jim Shenk, MCC Africa co-secretary.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has begun the slow process of hearing human rights abuse victims' stories of murder, police torture, and other abuses, reports Howard Zehr. Zehr, director of the MCC Office of Criminal Justice, recently returned from a trip to South Africa.



Archbishop Desmond Tutu, chair of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The commission has a large task: establishing and publicizing a complete picture of human rights violations under apartheid, recommending reparations to victims who are still living, and proposing measures to prevent future violations. Zehr says he was impressed with the "atmosphere of optimism, urgency, and openness" among South Africans with whom he met. He contributed to workshops and meetings on restorative justice that included members of church groups, nongovernmental organizations, social workers, and some police and district attorneys. He also met with justice minister Dullah Omar and other government members and led a workshop at Pollsmoor Prison.

Zehr felt "a sense of possibility and change but an urgency to get on with it before the door slams shut." Government leaders are interested in establishing a more restorative justice system, he says, but "they are under growing pressure from the public to get tough."

In the near future, MCC worker and mediation trainer Carl Stauffer will testify before the commission on victim-offender reconciliation and its possible role in the South African process.—*Ardell Stauffer*

Bolivian Mennonite missionaries 'can't help but tell' about their faith

Monteros Hoyos, Bolivia (MBM)—"Thanks be to God that we have the privilege to be the first missionaries in this village!" exclaims Ignacio Suarez, Bolivian Mennonite missionary in Monteros Hoyos, spreading his arms to embrace the entire village in a gesture.

Originally from Santa Cruz, Suarez, his wife, Charo, and their three children moved to this tiny village about 30 miles from Santa Cruz three months ago to start a church there. This new outreach results from a partnership among Mennonites in Bolivia, Brazil, and North America through Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

Despite the overwhelming enthusiasm the family has for their mission work in Monteros Hoyos, they face a number of obstacles. Many of the 250 families who live in the area surrounding the village need medical attention they cannot afford. These families come to the Suarez family, knowing they are missionaries and expecting help.

"The people here don't understand why the missionaries don't have money to just give them," Charo Suarez says. "There was once a woman with a very sick child. The child needed to go to the hospital in Santa Cruz. She could not understand why we couldn't just give her the money for it."

In another instance, a hunger-relief agency used a church in Monteros Hoyos as a distribution center to feed hungry children. "Instead of giving all of the resources out as they were supposed to, they were keeping part of them for themselves," he says. Although this was not a Mennonite church, the congregation cast shadows on all evangelical churches in Latin America. As a result, some of the families in Monteros Hoyos distrust the new missionaries and their intentions.

In spite of the obstacles, the Suarezes see a difference. About 15 people attend meetings each week in their home. People frequently stop by to talk or borrow something, which puts them in contact with the Suarez family regularly.

Ignacio Suarez, who enjoys teaching and has some seminary training, spends most of his time leading weekly Bible studies and talking with those interested in learning more about the Bible. "I love to teach, especially from God's word," he says. "I'm blessed for the opportunity to be able to share with these people who have not been able to hear the good news their whole lives."

Charo Suarez, on the other hand, acts as the evangelist in the family. Drawing on her seminary training, she visits many women in the village, talking about her faith. "It is what is on my heart," she says. "I tell people of the Word of God, because it is so full inside me that I can't help but to tell everyone."

Although most of their visiting and sharing of their faith would look like socializing to outsiders, the Suarezes view this approach to evangelization as integral to their mission in Monteros Hoyos. "We don't preach at them, telling them how to live," she says. "We live our lives, share our faith, and teach the Word of God by the words we speak and the things we do every day."

> ***We don't preach at them, telling them how to live. We live our lives, share our faith, and teach the Word of God by the words we speak and the things we do every day.***
>
> **—Charo Suarez**

The house where the Suarez family lives was bought partially through a gift given to the Bolivian Mennonite Conference by the Brazilian Mennonite Church. The money given by the Brazilian Mennonite Church came from the sale of a house MBM purchased some years ago for the mission work in that country. In addition to this, MBM and the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Overseas Mission together provide a portion of the annual budget for the Bolivian Mennonite Conference.

"They had a chance for a better-paying job with another church mission agency that wanted to hire them," says Frieda Erb, MBM Latin America representative. "They chose to take the lower-paying job because they believe that's where God wanted them."

The Suarez family signed a three-year contract with the Bolivian Mennonite Conference to serve in Monteros Hoyos. They, however, see their commitment in the village as potentially long-term. "We will stay here as long as God has need for us," he says. "Until that time comes, we will do the work we each are able, to the best of our ability."

—*Christy Risser*

Bolivian Mennonite missionaries Charo and Ignacio Suarez are starting a new church in Monteros Hoyos. The outreach stems from a partnership of Mennonites in Bolivia, Brazil, and North America through Mennonite Board of Missions. The Suarez family moved from Santa Cruz to Monteros Hoyos, about 30 miles away, several months ago.

- **Liberian peacemaker crosses border.** Samuel Gbayde Doe, the Liberian peacemaker who was to begin studies at Eastern Mennonite University in April but was unable to leave his country due to fighting, crossed the Liberian border into Côte d'Ivoire on May 9. Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Central Committee have joined efforts to support Doe's completion of a one-year graduate degree in conflict transformation and are appealing to North Americans for financial contributions to support the Does.

- **Dutch Mennonite minister dies.** H. C. "Leni" Dijkhuis-Leignes Bakhoven, a Mennonite minister in the Netherlands who hid Jews and members of the resistance movement during World War II, died April 13. Shortly after the war she worked with Mennonite Central Committee to aid refugees from the Soviet Union by finding them temporary housing. She pastored at five Dutch congregations and preached throughout the eastern part of the Netherlands.

- **Faculty appointed.** Goshen (Ind.) College has named three new faculty members in communication, marketing, and English. They are: Todd Davis, assistant professor of English; Cheryl Detweiler Kaufman, assistant professor of marketing; and Doug Leichty Caskey, associate professor of communication. Davis and Kaufman begin their duties in the fall of 1996, and Caskey starts in 1997.

- **Peace fair held.** Over 500 people attended a recent peace fair in Washington, D.C., planned in part by Christian Peacemaker Teams and the Mennonite Board of Missions Voluntary Service program. Highlights of the five-day event in the crimprone neighborhood of Columbia Heights included the Peace Factory display and local music groups.

- **Groundbreaking held.** A groundbreaking ceremony at Hope Village, a multi-level retirement community with a planned 378 living units, was held April 21 in Canby, Ore. Hope Village is a project of Housing and Outreach Project for Elderly, Inc. (H.O.P.E.), a nonprofit corporation founded by members of the Zion and Calvary Mennonite churches in 1983. Currently, nine churches in western Oregon are supporting members of H.O.P.E. Inc.

- **Documentary honored.** "Brother, Brother," a documentary video about the reconciliation work of the Nazareth Hospital in Israel, recently won a silver screen award from the U.S. International Film and Video Festival. The video tells the story of a wounded Israeli soldier and the Palestinian taxi driver who saves his life by rushing him to the Nazareth Hospital. "Brother, Brother" was produced by Michael Hostetler and directed by Ron Byler and is available from Mennonite Media Ministries.

- **Coming events:**
Know Jesus 96, a convention for junior high youth, Goshen (Ind.) College, Aug. 2-4. Sponsored by the Amigo Centre and Camp Friedenswald. Speakers are Bob Sprunger and Brenda Sawatzky-Paetkau. Includes seminars, service projects, tournaments, and free-time activities. Registration deadline is June 15. More information from 616 651-2811.
"Responding to Clergy Misconduct," Des Moines (Iowa) Mennonite Church, Sept. 5-7. The conference provides training for persons in church leadership on how to conduct a healthy process in a case of clergy misconduct. Trainers include Dale Stoltzfus, David Brubaker, Chilton Knudsen, and John Esau. Registration brochures are available from Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries at 219 294-7523.

- **New appointments:**
Melanie A. Zuercher, assistant editor for *The Mennonite.*

- **New books:**
The Flying Pie and Other Stories by Susan Yoder Ackerman is a collection of true stories for children from the Tidewater region of Virginia. Available from Herald Press at 800 245-7894.

- **New resources:**
Sent into God's World is a new Bible study guide by Helen Dueck. Produced by Women in Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Women's Missionary and Service Commission of the Mennonite Church, the guide is the second is the "Household of God" series. Available from WMSC at 219 294-7131.

- **Job openings:**
Administrator, Manheim (Pa.) Christian Day School. Skills in communication, leadership, and development necessary. Send résumé and salary expectations to Steve Johnson,

Singing through the ages. *Leola, Pa.*—Glenn Lehman from Harmonies Workshop, Leola, Pa., directs the Foresingers at Elizabethtown College. The Foresingers, a Mennonite ensemble of twelve voices, were filmed April 21 outside of Bucher Meeting House at Elizabethtown College, by Yale Roe Films from New York City. The Foresingers will be part of a PBS television special to be aired this fall. *Jerusalem 3000* commemorates the 3,000th anniversary of the city.

The Foresingers began performing 18th-century Mennonite music three years ago. "I came upon this music merely by curiosity," says Lehman. "What did we sing before the singing school cultural revolution? After I found out, I could understand why a CD of chants made the charts. We don't need to go to the Middle Ages; we just need to go back 200 years, and the mystery and sublimity are waiting for us."

Manheim Christian Day School, 686 Lebanon Rd., Manheim, PA 17545.

Director of development, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center. Responsibilities include fundraising by writing newsletters, visiting churches, and soliciting donors. Half-time position begins July 1. Application deadline is June 21. Send résumé or inquiries to Myrna Miller, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 West 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632.

Graphic designer, Hesston (Kan.) College. Qualifications include familiarity with PageMaker and Illustrator (PC environment). Bachelor's degree in design or related field and experience preferred. Part-time, year-round position begins in August. Submit résumé, list of references, and samples of work to Larry Bartel, director of publications, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062.

Head cook-cafeteria manager, Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind. Responsibilities include managing cafeteria and supervising personnel. Send résumé to Allan Dueck, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

Kindergarten teacher and librarian-tutor openings, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center. Both are full-time voluntary service positions. Two part-time paid teaching positions also available in music and physical education. Send résumé and inquiries to Myrna Miller, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 West 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632.

Teaching positions, Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind. Openings in orchestra and computer science and mathematics. Send résumé to Allan Dueck, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

Overseas area director, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa. Qualifications include pastoral and administrative abilities and overseas missions experience, preferably in Africa. Full-time position begins Jan. 1, 1997. Contact David Shenk at 717 898-2251.

Staff positions, Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa. Responsibilities for guest group coordinator include coordinating arrangements and billing for guest groups and sharing in office duties. Also open is a combined position of teacher-naturalist and program assistant. Contact Paul Beiler at 800 822-7505.

Temporary reference librarian, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Qualifications include graduate degree in library science, and proficiency in library automated systems and database searching. Responsibilities include overall reference desk service, desk coverage scheduling, and supervision of student assistants and staff. Send letter of application and résumé to Orval J. Gingerich, associate academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

non-violence
in a violent world

Multicultural Christian youth talk about fights, abuse peer pressure and guns at school. Can Christians really "turn the other cheek"? These youth think so! Struggle with them. Four 10 minute segments. Includes leaders guide.

Contact the MCC office nearest you to borrow this video. Available for purchase from MCC in Akron: Institutions $75 (Cdn.)/$60 (U.S.), Individuals $25(Cdn.) /$20 (U. S.).

Video for youth

Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S.
21 South 12th Street
PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

MCC Canada
134 Plaza Drive
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381

NEW MEMBERS

Ambler, Pa.: Erv Gant, Mary Gant, Morris Gant, Maria Gant, and Ann Buhman Evans.

Blooming Glen, Pa.: Mark Hockman, Jennifer Kulp, Jonathan Lyons, Mark Miller, Travis Moyer, and Robin Schilling.

Charlotte Street, Lancaster, Pa.: April Waughtel, Charles Snyder, Phillip Stoltzfus, G. David Keener, Joylynn Keener, J. Robert Petersheim, Cynthia Smoker, LeVon Smoker, Ruby Stoltzfus, Marie Francois-Zimmerman, J. David Lundquist, Kristine Lundquist, Delphine Martin, Jeffrey Martin, Alonna Gautsche-Sprunger, Michael Sprunger, and Chuck Zimmerman.

Forest Hills, Leola, Pa.: Scott Kreider, Sarah Lantz, Geoffrey Nolt, Nathanael Overly, Shawn Rice, Sheldon Rice, Megan Rutt, Kristy Shellenberger, Crystal Smoker, Kenton Stuckey, Kyle Wagner, and Jared Zimmerman.

Forks, Middlebury, Ind.: Amy Rogers and Matthew Plank.

Hesston Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, Hesston, Kan.: Yuko Horikoshi, Lisa Jantz, Candace Krieger, Tona Turner, Bradley Schmidt, and Dave and Lynnette Zook.

Perkasie, Pa.: Darren Alderfer, Ryan Alderfer, Lisen Cummings, and Angela Ehst.

Salem, Ore.: Andrea Toews and Nick Oesch.

Sugar Creek, Wayland, Iowa: Kathie Grimm, Mat Leichty, Mike Roth, and Marie Roth.

Tedrow, Wauseon, Ohio: Leland Hoylman, Barbara Hoylman, Lisa Hoylman, and Barry Hoylman.

BIRTHS

Brubaker, Lynne Sensenig and Jan, Ephrata, Pa., Amber Sensenig (second child), May 7.

Detweiler, Diane Halteman and Phil, Telford, Pa., Seth Andrew (third child), March 28.

Eichelberger, Jenny Saltzman and Scott, Geneva, Neb., Nicholas Scott (second child), May 3.

Goering, Karen Howell and Gene, Archbold, Ohio, Brandon Michael (third child), April 15.

Grove, Tina Martin and Andy, Richmond, Va., Dylan Andrew (first child), Dec. 16, 1995.

Haller, Joyce Hollinger and Rick, Ephrata, Pa., Aubrey Danielle (third child), April 18.

Hartzler, Esther Diaz and Gene, Belleville, Pa., Gabriel LeRoy (second child), April 17.

Kisare, Gail and Freddy, Radnor, Pa., Justin Amani (second child), May 3.

Landes, Gwen Landis and Corey, Telford, Pa., Nathan Curtis (second child), April 26.

Moore, Carolyn Brown and Michael, Cedar Falls, Iowa, John Martin Oliver (third child), May 5.

Mumaw, Robin and Robert, Newport News, Va., Nicholas Robert (second child), March 29.

Peifer, Yvonne Ott and Karl, Akron, Pa., Zachary Karl (third child), April 1.

Short, Cinamon Brookmyer and Tony, Toledo, Ohio, Tessa Lynn (first child), May 10.

Stutzman, Kari King and Todd, Canby, Ore., Jesse Todd (second child), April 27.

Weaver, Anna Risto and Scott, Waterloo, Ont., Tessa Elizabeth (second child), April 16.

Weber, Heather Derksen and Dave, St. Jacobs, Ont., Madeline Rachel (first child), April 18.

MARRIAGES

Anderson-Colucci: Elizabeth Anderson, Norristown, Pa. (Charlotte Street), and Richard Colucci, Norristown, Pa. (Abrams Community Chapel), March 9, by Leon Miller.

Christophel-Wagner: Todd Christophel, Goshen, Ind. (Communion Fellowship), and Janet Wagner, Bainbridge, Pa., April 13, by Shawn Erb.

Clark-Tullis: Jenita Clark, Salem, Ohio (Midway), and Ky Tullis, Washingtonville, Ohio (Methodist), May 4, by Dean Hammond.

Darnall-Litwiller: Loretta Darnall and Lyle Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill. (Hopedale), May 2, by H. James Smith.

Galer-Peachey: Christopher Galer, Harrisburg, Pa. (Christian Life Assembly), and Pamila Peachey, Mechanicsburg, Pa. (Locust Grove), April 13, by Don Delagrange.

Garges-Mellott: Jeffrey A. Garges, Telford, Pa. (Christ Church), and Melissa J. Mellott, Telford, Pa. (Towamencin), May 4, by Gregory P. Grigsby and Steven C. Nyce.

Kruse-Roth: Benjamin Kruse, Bluffton, Ohio, and Carrie Roth, Archbold, Ohio (Lockport), April 20, by Allen Rutter.

Moshier-Walseman: Tracy Moshier, Croghan, N.Y. (Croghan), and Jon Walseman, Castorland, N.Y. (Catholic), May 4, by Bruce Lyndaker.

Stringer-Thompson: Kelly Stringer, Aurora, Ore. (Zion), and James Thompson, Newberg, Ore., April 27, by Mark Thompson and Richard Regier.

DEATHS

Blosser, Sanford Daniel, 72, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Nov. 26, 1923, Rockingham County, Va., to Daniel Jacob and Grace Pearl Heatwole Blosser. Died: April 24, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—wife: Mabellee Shank Blosser; children: Carroll Sanford, Arlan Lynell; sister: Thelma Good; 5 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: April 27, Weavers Mennonite Church, by Joseph C. Shenk and Roy Bucher.

Freed, Raymond F., 92, Harleysville, Pa. Born: Feb. 28, 1904, Towamencin Twp., Pa., to Enos and Sally Frederick Freed. Died: May 1, 1996, Souderton, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—son: David L.; 2 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, 3 step-grandchildren, 4 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Alice Ritter Freed (wife). Funeral and burial: May 5, Towamencin Mennonite Church, by Steven C. Nyce.

Garber, Olive Mae Miller, 97, Hubbard, Ore. Born: April 29, 1899, Kalona, Iowa, to David D. and Naomi Miller. Died: May 1, 1996, Silverton, Ore. Survivors—children: Wayne, John, William, Elsie Mengershausen, Alice Bender, Goldie Heyerly, Jewell Kennel; brother and sister: Harold Miller, Mabel Berry; 31 grandchildren, 63 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lewis J. Garber (husband) and Hugh (son). Funeral and burial: May 4, Zion Mennonite Church, by Del Hershberger and Richard Regier.

Graber, Esther, 83, Goshen, Ind. Born: Nov. 27, 1912, Noble, Iowa, to Daniel and Fanny Conrad Graber. Died: April 3, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—sisters: Elizabeth Stoltzfus, Lena Graber. Funeral: April 6, College Mennonite Church, by James Waltner. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

Martin, Hazel Irene Peltz, 88, Manson, Iowa. Born: Sept. 20, 1907, Carlock, Ill. Died: April 17, 1996, Hutchinson, Kan. Survivors—sons: David, Dale; brothers and sisters: Albert, Louis, and Ray Peltz, Laura Schley, Margaret Faine, Agnes Bargsten, Ethel Hoyer; 5 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Owen M. Martin (husband) and Delbert (son). Funeral: April 22, Manson Mennonite Church, by Curt Kuhns. Burial: Rose Hill Cemetery.

Mast, Eunice L., 89, Honey Brook, Pa. Born: Oct. 17, 1906, Minot, N.D., to Isaac and Fannie Yoder Mast. Died: April 17, 1996. Survivors—sister: S. Ruth Roth. Congregational membership: Maple Grove Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 19, Tel Hai Chapel, by Herman N. Glick and Clair Umble. Burial: Pine Grove Cemetery.

Mohamed, Chansy, 79, Kitchener, Ont. Born: Dec. 10, 1916, Laos. Died: April 27, 1996, Kitchener, Ont., of kidney failure. Survivors—children: Abath, Somchanh, Fatima, Amina, Somchith Khouhathong, Husen; 10 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Akbaraly Mohamed (husband). Funeral and burial: April 29, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, by Ongath Phounsavath and Harold Hildebrand Schlegel.

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Peachey, John S., 54, Belleville, Pa. Born: Sept. 29, 1941, Belleville, Pa., to John S. and Arie E. Peachey. Died: April 30, 1996, Belleville, Pa. Survivors—wife: Rhoda Peachey; children: Joan Savage, Brent M., Miranda L.; brother and sister: Jesse Lee, Naomi R.; one grandchild. Funeral: May 3, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by Ivan E. Yoder and Jonathan Yoder. Burial: Locust Grove Cemetery.

Reist, Donald E., 71, Scottdale, Pa. Born: April 27, 1925, Mt. Joy, Pa., to Alvin J. and Mary Eberly Reist. Died: May 9, 1996, Scottdale, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Ilse Hochstaettler Reist; sons: Joel Philip, Hans-Peter, Christopher; brother: Henry; 2 grandchildren. Memorial service: May 18, Mennonite Church of Scottdale, by Willard Roth. Cremated.

Steiner, Anthony Glenn, 17, Dalton, Ohio. Born: Jan. 30, 1979, Wooster, Ohio, to Glenn and Arneda Shank Steiner. Died: April 30, 1996, Dalton, Ohio, from muscular dystrophy. Survivors—sisters: Becky Oswald, Janna, LaVonne. Congregational membership: Smithville Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: May 3, Kidron Mennonite Church, by Richard Ross and Bill Detweiler.

Troyer, Bertha Barbara, 95, Albany, Ore. Born: Jan. 14, 1901, McPherson County, Kan., to Menno Z. and Susan Miller Troyer. Died: April 29, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivor—sister: Dorothy Schrock. Congregational membership: Albany Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 4, Hesston, Kan., by Peter Hartman. Burial: West Liberty Cemetery.

Yoder, John, 77, Belleville, Pa. Born: April 6, 1919, Belleville, Pa., to Crist P. and Lydia Sharp Yoder. Died: April 22, 1996, Lewistown, Pa. Survivors—wife: Mary B. Hostetler Yoder; children: Lois Yoder-Swaim, Kay Semler, Kermit M.; brothers and sisters: Lomie A., Aaron S., Alpheus J., Naomi B., Joseph W.; 8 grandchildren. Funeral: April 25, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by Ivan E. Yoder and Erie Renno. Burial: Locust Grove Cemetery.

Yoder, Mary Ellen Detweiler, 87, Fairview, Mich. Born: April 6, 1909, Fairview, Mich., to Samuel and Malinda Kauffman Detweiler. Died: May 3, 1996, Fairview, Mich, of a stroke. Survivors—husband: Clifford Yoder; brother and sister: Oren, Stella Troyer. Congregational membership: Fairview Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 6, Fairview, Mich., by Virgil Hershberger. Burial: Fairview Cemetery.

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Living with ambiguity (2):

Are there then no boundaries?

Anytime one talks about the gray areas of life (see last week's editorial), a certain amount of nervousness can set in. "Are there then no boundaries?" we ask. "Does anything go?"

Those questions soon faced the early church following Jesus' ascension. As this church grew rapidly, new people brought with them all kinds of issues. The church was no more than halfway through the book of Acts when it began dealing with boundary questions:

"What do you have to believe and do to be a Christian? What makes you a member of the community of believers, the church?"

As we do today, the early church called a conference. After days of meeting, as recorded in Acts 15, the church agreed to retain some boundaries, remove others, and set new ones.

The two they reaffirmed were belief in Jesus Christ (v. 7) and evidence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life (v. 8). Circumcision they removed as a requirement (v. 19). The church also added three boundaries: refrain from food offered to idols, from things strangled, and from sexual impurity (v. 29).

"Why can't we be more like this early church?" we sometimes ask. "Why can't we be as definite about taking stands?"

One would hope our chief boundaries today are the same as those of this early church: belief in Jesus and evidence of the presence of the Spirit. Do we have anything beyond that?

We do. A look at the history of the Mennonite Church for the past 25 years shows we too have been active with boundaries. Since 1971, when the church reorganized itself, Mennonite General Assembly has issued 10 statements about belief and practice for our life together.

Like some boundaries of the early church, some of our statements have responded to specific situations. One on amnesty (1975) dealt with the church's attitude toward Vietnam War draft dodgers seeking to return home. Another on the use of the law (1981) sought to give the church guidance on how to live in an increasingly litigious culture.

Other Assembly statements attempted to guide the church on biblical interpretation (1977), leadership and authority (1981), and how the Holy Spirit comes and finds expression in the lives of believers (1977).

At least two statements set clear boundaries: "Abortion violates the biblical principles of the sanctity and value of human life," says a 1975 Mennonite General Assembly statement. Another on human sexuality, adopted in 1987, says: "Genital activity is reserved for a man and a woman united in a marriage covenant."

One General Assembly statement—on understanding the roles of men and women (1975)—removed a previous boundary. It says: "All gifts given to persons by the Holy Spirit need to be discerned and allowed freedom of expression, irrespective of [gender]."

No, it's not that we haven't been setting boundaries. What has taken more energy are the disagreements and arguments that result when we do. Then what?

Again, we can learn from the early church. Evidently the apostle Paul was unhappy with the church's decision on meat offered to idols. In his first letter to the Corinthian church, he spent a whole chapter arguing about why this boundary didn't mean anything. But then he said: "If food is a cause of [someone] falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall" (1 Cor. 8:13).

Most of us want boundaries sometimes and open doors at others, Ruth Lesher points out in her article this issue (page 1). She didn't articulate the obvious that most of us know all too well: the boundaries we want are for others, the open doors for ourselves.

But Paul points us to another way. It is to set our own boundaries for the sake of others. It is to limit our freedom so that others will not be turned from God. It is to live by the second of Jesus' commandments: that others are as important as ourselves.

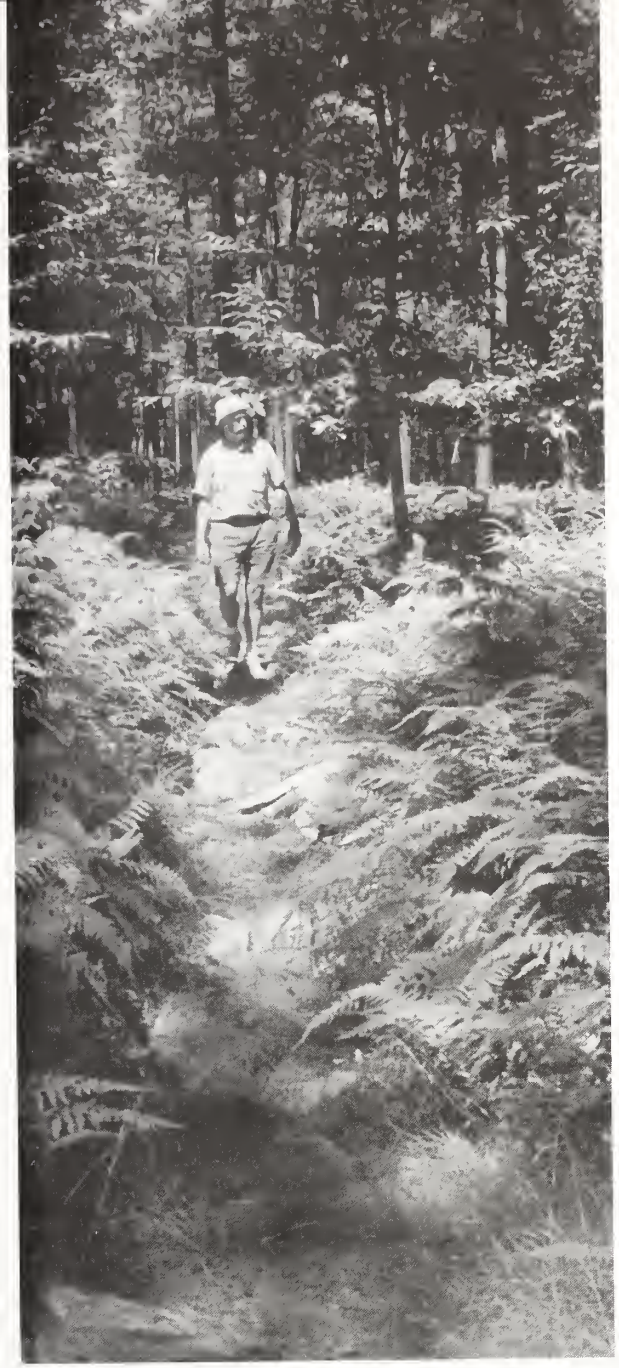
Might that be God's call to us today with respect to boundaries—to put the spiritual lives of others before our own desires, believing those others are as sincere and as committed to following Jesus as we are? If we do that, I suspect the questions of boundaries will begin to fade in their importance.—*jlp*

This is the second of a series of three editorials on living with ambiguity. Next week: "O freedom!"

June 4, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



Spirituality is usually understood as an internal work of God. But true spirituality is demonstrated and in part sustained by patterns of living. The interior life and the external life are intimately related.

What does spirituality have to do with healing?

One of the most restorative proclamations one can hear is: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

by Dennis Hollinger

God is in the healing business. Unfortunately, that very notion sometimes conjures up images of long emotional healing lines, fraudulent claims to miracles, and quack healers who make a mint off their victims. But even a cursory reading of the Bible reveals the evidence—God heals human beings.

Perhaps part of the controversy surrounding healing stems from our failure to recognize that God heals in various ways. There are at least four types of divine healing through which physical and emotional restoration come:

God heals through natural process. Our maker has created us with built-in mechanisms through which healing occurs. When we have a wound or cut, the blood normally coagulates to stop the bleeding. When an infection invades our bodies, it faces combatants in white blood cells. These are forms of divine healing which God created within our bodies.

God heals through the healing arts—the insights that humans have garnered over the years. Throughout history the human race has discovered new understandings of the body, the mind, nutrition, and medicine. From a Christian standpoint, all truth is God's truth, and thus these discoveries of the healing profession

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Alan Kauffman:
What Carol Smith taught me about the holy kiss 6

India 1997 plans underway:
Continental groups design days 9

Mennonite young adults address need for community 10

The evidence for spirituality as an agent of healing is overwhelming. We are not surprised that society overlooks this, but often the church ignores it as well.

are gifts of God and a form of divine healing.

God heals through direct intervention. This type of healing is usually designated divine. There are indeed times when God directly intervenes into the human mind and body to bring healing. In this form, God may use the natural process or bypass those mechanisms; but in either way, it is an intervention beyond that which is natural and explainable from a purely scientific standpoint. There are two mistakes that Christians may make regarding this type of healing: that God *never* heals directly, or that God will *always* work this way.

God heals through spirituality. Health and healing to the mind and body sometimes come through a life of deep spirituality and the spiritual resources available to us in our journey with Christ. This type of divine healing is linked to the fact that we are whole beings whose physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions are deeply intertwined. Thus some of our physical symptoms and illnesses are related to an unhealthy internal state which can be cured through spirituality.

We must, of course, be careful when we speak of spirituality, for there are spurious forms which may indeed have positive affects upon people but that are not rooted in the truth of Jesus Christ. As Christian philosopher Dallas Willard notes, "Much modern thinking views spirituality as simply a kind of 'inferiority'—the idea that there is an inside to the human being, and that this is the place where contact is made with the transcendental. In this view, spirituality is essentially a human dimension." But Christian spirituality is transcendent, being centered in a new birth through Jesus Christ and guided by the authority of Scripture. Such spirituality does indeed have an impact upon our physical and mental health; it is a form of divine healing.

The evidence for spirituality as an agent of healing is quite overwhelming. We are not surprised when a secular society overlooks this reality, but too often the church has ignored it as well.

Marianne K. Hering states the case clearly: Pluck any person out of a church pew on Sunday morning and compare that person to a neighbor who is at home, poring over the Sunday newspaper in an easy chair. Let's say the two are the same age and earn comparable salaries. Neither of them smokes, drinks, or plays the lottery. Both floss their teeth, collect baseball cards, and enjoy cheesecake. Which one will live the longer and enjoy the benefits of a stable marriage? Answer: the man or woman in the pew. In recent years, scientific research is backing up what common sense has told us for years: churchgoers live longer, stay married, and feel happier than those who say they don't believe in God.

Though there has been in the past a bias against connecting spirituality and health, a growing number of scientists are studying the phenomenon. Several years ago researcher David Larson and his colleagues studied the major findings from recent decades on the relationship between religion and health. Contrary to popular belief, enormous evidence exists for a positive correlation between spirituality and both mental and physical health. As Larson noted in an interview with *Christianity Today,* "Church attendance, prayer, and the social support available in church were frequently found to be significant positive factors in helping patients with mental or physical health problems."

Larson is not alone in his findings; evidence collected by other researchers demonstrates that spirituality is a form of divine healing for both the body and the mind. But what exactly are those spiritual resources that engender health and healing? At least five spiritual resources are related to health and healing.

Forgiveness. At the very core of Christian spirituality is forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ. God grants forgiveness to humans caught in the morass of guilt. Modern men and women don't particularly like the notion of guilt because it seems at odds with a relativistic worldview. But guilt is a reality with spiritual, emotional, and physical residue. Despite the prevalence of relativism today, many people still experience guilt, which affects their health.

Thus the forgiveness we experience in Christ is significant for our health. The ongoing forgiveness we receive produces a healing balm in Gilead. One of the most restorative and hopeful proclamations a person can hear is, "If we confess our sins, he [Christ] who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Prayer. People view prayer in various ways. Secularists see it primarily as a therapeutic crutch that acts as a cathartic experience. Believers see it as real communication with the God of the universe through which God inter-

venes in our lives. However one regards the reality of prayer, the empirical evidence for its positive impact on health and healing is very strong.

Larry Dossey writes in *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine* (Harper, 1993), "The evidence is simply overwhelming that prayer functions at a distance to change physical processes in a variety of organisms, from bacteria to humans. . . . These data are so impressive that I have come to regard them as among the best-kept secrets in medical science." Dossey points to studies that demonstrate the positive effect of prayer on everything from high blood pressure and heart attacks to wounds. He believes that the evidence is so strong that physicians who ignore or scorn prayer for sick patients are guilty of spiritual malpractice, though he cautions about improper uses of prayer and coercion.

In a study of 393 patients in a San Francisco Cardiac Care Unit, almost half the group was randomly chosen to receive intercessory prayer from a prayer group in the hospital. As a whole, the patients who received the prayer support had less congestive heart failure, pneumonia, antibiotics, intubation, and cardiac arrest. The randomness of this study meant these people were not predisposed toward better health or spirituality.

But it doesn't take empirical studies to understand all this. Christians through the centuries have clearly understood the power of prayer in health and healing. Through liturgies, small prayer groups, family prayers, and personal intercession, prayer has been closely linked with restoration to physical and emotional health.

The Bible. It is unfortunate that in the resurgence of spirituality and spiritual disciplines, the Bible often gets left on the shelf. Meditation, journaling, creative forms of prayer, fasting, and working with clay are quite popular, but the Word of God is too often ignored.

The Bible is a spiritual resource for health because it is our compass for life. It provides a frame of reference to understand who we are, our fundamental malady in life, and God's designs for dealing with the human predicament. The late psychologist Eric Fromm contended that one of the basic needs of people is a clear frame of reference to make sense of life. "The need for a system of orientation and devotion is an intrinsic part of human experience," he wrote.

Without a compass we are adrift in the seas of human wanderings; we are without rootage, meaning, and a standard by which we can judge the thoughts and actions that beg for our attention and commitments. The Bible is that compass for life. As a spiritual discipline, it meets one of the basic needs we have as human beings. In providing a truly transcendent frame of reference, the written Word engenders health—spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

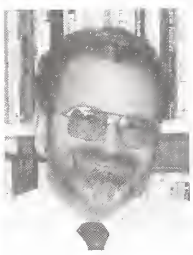
But the Bible is not only a compass for life; it is also a great source of personal comfort, strength, and power. The pages of Scripture constantly sustain and thus bring healing to people in the face of physical and emotional maladies. Promises such as these are health-producing: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me" (Psalm 23:4).

Christian morality. Spirituality is usually understood as an internal work of God. But true spirituality is demonstrated and in part sustained by patterns of living. The interior life and the exterior life are intimately related and

(continued on page 8)

"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"—Psalm 8:3-4

Gospel Herald



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READERS SAY

Sider Calls Christians . . . to Resist Nationalistic Pride (Apr. 16). In his speech at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Ron Sider said he considers "the poor" as the lens through which to evaluate politics. This seems a direct contradiction to a later statement of his in opposition to one-issue politics. And while the concern for the poor is important, Lev. 19:15 speaks directly to this issue: "Be honest and just when you make decisions in legal cases; do not show favoritism to the poor or fear the rich."

Sider also said he "believes God has a position on each issue. But you and I don't know what it is." However, if we use the most basic element of our Bible, the Decalogue, we have a very good basis from which to understand God's position. The Ten Commandments are more than a morally relative list of rules. They are foundational to a free and virtuous society. These are natural laws that precede all human laws. Unless these laws are directly amended in the New Testament, they still apply.

Sider also stated that "the growing economic gap is fundamentally immoral." What moral code does he subscribe to? It must be one that embraces envy and covetousness. God created us all as unique individuals with various abilities. Those abilities, when applied to the physical world, will manifest themselves in various levels of wealth.

Some people have the ability to produce goods and services that others will actually pay for. These people then become wealthy. There is nothing immoral about wealth gaps as long as they are not the result of immoral activities. If a person "plays" by the rules, there is nothing immoral about the wealth that their God-given abilities have produced for them. What they do with the wealth may be a question for our churches, but not the wealth itself.

In the political arena, freedom should be viewed as not being forced to do someone else's bidding. Force should never be used to compel someone to do something that they do not want to do, good or bad. To use force to "do good" does not sit well with my understanding of being Mennonite. But maybe Mennonites now embrace violence for certain things.

Royce Buller
Goshen, Ind.

I surely was challenged by Carmen Schrock-Hurst's article, ***Some Things God Alone Can See*** (May 14). Having been a Christian for more than 50 years—hearing the Bible truths and even memorizing many of them—I found it very helpful to read about the faith journey of a young mother.

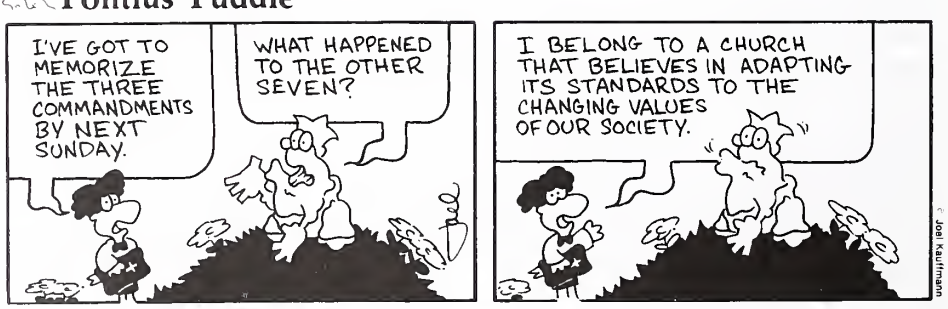
Here at the retirement home where I live, I also find myself face-to-face with the reality of pain and suffering. But Schrock-Hurst reminded me that we worship a God of justice and compassion who walks with us in healing and hope. And we await the coming of a new heaven and a new earth.

Grace Lehman
Lititz, Pa.

In ***If We Can't Evangelize, We Can't Exist*** (May 7), Leslie Francisco is reported as saying: "We're committed to the tenets of the faith and the Mennonite Church. . . . When you get hung up on the denominational aspect, you dilute the message of what Jesus is. We don't push Mennonite, Mennonite, Mennonite—we're trying to produce Christians first. It wouldn't work if we plastered Mennonite over everything; we would close the door to many people."

As one who was "grafted" into the

Pontius' Puddle



Mennonite church about 20 years ago, and one who continues to appreciate the distinctives of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith, I was reminded by these comments that what may seem an obstacle to one is an opportunity to another. The Mennonite church provides a dynamic way to introduce people to Jesus and the community of faith with distinctives such as nonviolence and peacemaking, an emphasis on sharing and mutual aid, responding to practical needs, and the importance of the community in knowing God and making sense of faith.

The Mennonite church has something important to offer to both Christians and seekers of faith. Rather than closing the door to others, using the term "Mennonite" provides a great opportunity to share an understanding of the Christian faith. Promoting with enthusiasm Mennonite distinctives is not diluting the message of Jesus—but clarifying it.

Brad A. Nance
Winnipeg, Man.

Mennonites are known as a peace church. But there are areas in which we do not have peace.

Do we have peace with the Word of God, its truth and verity? Do we have peace in our marriages? Do we have peace with the faith heritage of the saints in glory?

These are painful questions that I ask myself. Our denomination is what we believe and also practice. Do we want our witness to glorify God?

Wilmer Swope
Leetonia, Ohio

Your letters are welcomed, either about what your read in Gospel Herald *or about issues which are currently facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief and to one point. Send them to "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com*

Making the Penultimate Too Important Often Leads to Violence

This article by Ted Grimsrud (Apr. 23) makes me ask if I have taught my sixth-eighth grade Sunday school class the wrong lesson about Solomon. The writers of the Jubilee lesson this past month did not mention the greedy, power-seeking, ruthless, kingdom-stealing attributes that Ted Grimsrud recited in his article. Instead, we were instructed to study 1 Kings 3.

There the Scripture records that God was so pleased with Solomon's humble request for wisdom that God promised to give Solomon what he did not request—riches, honor, power, and a long life—so long as he walked in the ways of the Lord.

How does one ignore or explain the passages in which the Lord bestows on baby Solomon a special name, Jedidiah (2 Sam. 12:24-25), a promise of blessing (1 Chron. 17), and license to build a temple for the name of the Lord (1 Chron. 22)?

Although Solomon in his old age did turn his heart away from the Lord, we do him a grave disservice to make him appear a villain for receiving these blessings from the Lord. To pick Solomon, a man of peace and rest, as an example of violence over his father David, who God would not permit to build the temple because he had "shed too much blood on the earth" (1 Chron. 22:8) is almost funny.

I love the Old Testament. I frequently read it out loud to my grade school children (at their request), even the violent passages, so we can discuss the event, why it is recorded, and what we can learn about our God from them.

I realize the Israelites, even the "called" or "anointed" ones, would probably not make good Mennonites. But I wonder if it is ever wise to try to read the Old Testament "through" the Sermon on the Mount?

Julie Fisher
New Carlisle, Ohio

I am happy that Gary Blosser ("Readers Say," May 14) affirmed the main point of my article: that giving priority to things other than God often leads to violence. However, he does not want to apply that principle in as thoroughgoing a way as I do. I think it is possible to give too high a priority even to certain biblical statements.

Despite idealizing Solomon in places, the biblical record makes it clear that Solomon did indeed commit violence against other human beings. Seen in the context of the entire Bible (interpreted especially in light of the life and teaching of Jesus), the story of Solomon is a story of the sidetracking of God's people from God's will.

This principle of keeping God central (God understood as most fully revealed in Jesus) should be used to help us read the entire Bible. When we come across cases where the biblical writers express values which contradict what we know of God's will through Jesus, we should be critical of those writers.

That is what I believe is going on with the writer of 1 Chronicles in reporting: "The Lord highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel and bestowed on him royal splendor such as no king over Israel ever had before" (29:25). Rather than being misled by the values of a writer who obviously has made power politics a higher priority than service of the God who liberates slaves and establishes justice for the oppressed, we need to read the text critically and in light of what we are clearly told by Jesus and other prophets to be God's priorities.

I believe we should try to understand Solomon in light both of the fruits of his reign (centralized royal power, imperialism, increased poverty and injustice within Israel, the ultimate fall of the Israelite state) and the prophetic critique of kingship (expressed in passages such as Deut. 17 and 1 Sam. 8). When I do this, I am unable to escape the conclusion that Solomon was the agent of the powers of violence and injustice much more than the agent of the God of Abraham (and Jesus). I come to this conclusion in spite of what a few biblical writers who obviously idealized Solomon might have said about him.

Ted Grimsrud
Freeman, S.D.

What Carol Smith taught me

Times have changed, we say. Symbols lose their meaning and have to be replaced. But what is now our symbol of value and appreciation for each other?

by Alan Kauffman

This is a story of a Protestant girl teaching a Mennonite boy a lesson about the holy kiss that he would never forget. It's the story of a lesson about the fragile sacredness of life and about not taking our relationships for granted. The friendship between Carol Smith and me began on the bus in September 1969. Carol was an attractive, intelligent 11th-grade girl with a magnetic charisma. I, on the other hand, was a scrawny, shy, and unattractive seventh-grade boy, overwhelmed by the new and difficult world of junior high.

That morning, in the third week of my seventh-grade career, I walked back the aisle of the crowded bus and slipped into the first available seat I saw. I didn't even look to see who I sat beside but just plopped down and looked straight ahead, fearing that I might make eye contact with some angry 12th-grader whose seat I had taken and then find myself ejected.

Shortly after the bus began to move, the person beside me broke the silence in the little space of our seat. She said, "Hi, my name is Carol Smith, what's your name?" I was momentarily stunned; I was being spoken to! I dared a quick glance at her as I spoke and I saw a smile—a smile that felt a lot like a mother's hug to a scared seventh-grader.

Over the next few weeks I sat beside Carol one or two more times, and each time we found ourselves talking the entire trip. Eventually, as the weeks stretched into months, I found myself hoping that the seat next to her would be empty. Our conversations quickly moved from cliché, surface-chatting to things that really mattered to us. I remember discussing the terror, violence, and carnage of the Vietnam War and talking with awesome disbelief about men walking on the moon.

Carol had a gentle way of pursuing the significant things of my life: my interests, dreams, fears, and struggles as a seventh-grader. On more than one occasion, Carol would smile and reassure me, "In the blink of an eye, you will be out of school, and most of the things you believe might never come will be here and gone before you know it. But in the meantime," she would say, "enjoy your life now. Don't wish it away! I know some days are tough. But enjoy them; each one is a gift, and they will soon be gone." What she told me seemed inconceivable at the time. But she was right.

Five months passed. One Friday, as I was getting off the bus, I heard Carol's familiar benediction, "See you on Monday, Alan!" I looked back. She was smiling. I waved, smiled, and got off the bus.

But Monday never came for Carol. She was killed in a car accident on a snowy country road on Jan. 31. The next morning as I climbed onto the bus, the words, "See you on Monday, Alan," rang in my ears.

Carol's life nurtured me toward maturity. Her death, the first of its kind for me, was a wake-up call to reality. That is, I simply cannot assume that tomorrow will come. That reality affects the way I live my life and the way I relate to others.

That lesson is, in essence, part of the motivation behind the practice of the holy kiss that we read about in Scripture. The holy kiss was a customary greeting of the Jewish people long before the time of Christ. It was a ritualistic gesture that communicated respect, honor, and love. It was, of course, a "holy" kiss that Judas used in the garden to betray Jesus to a mob that was poised and anxious to arrest him. It was a morbid irony and a prostitution of the symbol.

A few years later, when the Christian church began to grow beyond the boundaries of Judaism, the ritual of the holy kiss was adopted as a common greeting. Five times in the New Testament epistles, church members were instructed to greet one another with the "kiss of love." Close to a fourth of the New Testament letters conclude with a reminder to continue this symbolic act of the holy kiss, suggesting that it was a regular and vital part of the early church.

The meaning could have only intensified as the Christian church encountered escalating persecution in the first century. While the kiss certainly maintained the meaning of respect, honor, and love, the rise in persecution also enlarged its meaning to include an appreciation of the relationships they enjoyed. As people left worship services each week, there was no guarantee that everyone would return. As the

about the holy kiss

congregation assembled each week, the meaning of the holy kiss now included the sentiment, "It's so good to see you again. We really didn't know if you would still be here or not. But I'm so glad you are!"

When Anabaptism was born in the 1500s, persecution for one's faith was a constant and harsh reality. Almost weekly, women and men fled for their lives, were dragged off to jail, suffered agonizing torture, and gave their lives as faithful martyrs. One never knew as Sunday's worship concluded if the congregation would ever be exactly the same again.

It is no surprise, then, that the holy kiss became an important part of our tradition. In fact, as late as the 1963 *Mennonite Confession of Faith*, the holy kiss was included as one of eight ordinances to be practiced regularly—along with such observances as baptism and communion—by the gathered body of Christ. Yet very few of the Mennonite churches I have attended take this ordinance as seriously as baptism and communion.

Times have changed, we say. Symbols lose their meaning and have to be replaced by fresh, life-giving ones, we argue. It is a risky symbol, open to abuse by Christians and misunderstanding by non-Christians, we suppose. The holy kiss is a rural, "house-church" symbol—of friend greeting friend. We can't be expected to practice it in urban, "megachurch" settings with strangers and casual acquaintances, we reason.

But perhaps the most significant reason the holy kiss is no longer practiced is that we are no longer physically persecuted for our faith. If every so often one of our church families had to flee for their lives, or somebody we loved were dragged off to jail for their faith, we would not worry much about the possibility of the symbol being abused. And I do not think we would care if we were misunderstood. What would matter is that other people matter—and we would be eager to express that to them.

I am not calling for a complete reinstatement of the age-old practice of the holy kiss. But I am urging us to continue holding on dearly to its meaning and to put that meaning into practice regularly. We must begin to live in ways that do not take our relationships for granted. We must begin to live in ways that do not assume that we will ever see each other again and that visibly, concretely, and habitually express just how much we value and appreciate each other.

Carol's death, the first of its kind for me, was a wake-up call. I cannot assume tomorrow will come. That reality affects the way I live—and relate to others.

For some, that expression might be with the long-standing tradition of the holy kiss. But we can use any number of other culturally acceptable expressions to show and tell people just how good it is to see them again.

Carol Smith, a Protestant girl, taught me, a Mennonite boy, about the holy kiss. Her instruction provided one of the most valuable lessons I have learned—that none of the relationships that we cherish is guaranteed for another tomorrow. Our "See you on Monday" partings that flow so easily and nonchalantly from our lips may or may not ever come to pass. I did not know that as a seventh-grader. But through Carol's life, and especially through her death, she taught me about the fragile sacredness of my own life and the life of others. It is a lesson worth living.

Alan Kauffman is pastor of Glade Mennonite Church in Accident, Md., and moderator-elect of Allegheny Conference. He and his wife, Nancy, have two teenage sons, Nate and Matt.

What does spirituality have to do with healing?

(continued from page 3)

should nourish each other. Christian morality is thus part of spirituality.

One Christian principle is that marriage is a binding covenant that is not to be broken. In recent years the church has likely done more to help people cope with painful divorce than to articulate God's intentions for marriage. After years of stressing only the law of God, we now seem to have gone to the other extreme by emphasizing primarily divine grace to the loss of divine law. But the medical evidence is fairly clear that God's design for human marriage is health-producing.

Recent research indicates that divorce takes a huge toll not only on the human psyche but on the body as well. David Larson found that divorce is just slightly less dangerous physically than smoking a pack of cigarettes a day.

Or take the moral issue of sexual behavior. Those who don't have sexual intercourse before marriage and who are faithful in marriage have a very small chance of getting AIDS and no chance of getting other sexually transmitted diseases. What is surprising, however, is that those practicing traditional Christian sexual morality have healthier physical relationships and actually enjoy sex more. One recent study, "What's Marriage Got to Do with It?" found that couples who abstained from sexual intercourse before marriage were 29-47 percent more likely to enjoy sex after they were married than were those who did not abstain. And researchers at the University of Chicago in 1994 found that evangelical Christians and Roman Catholics had sex more frequently and enjoyed it more than other segments of the population.

Christian community. One of the most significant spiritual resources for creating health and healing is a community of people who gather regularly to worship, pray, hear the Scriptures proclaimed and applied to life, and be a caring community rooted in something transcending itself. Recent discussions of spirituality often ignore the church, but the New Testament is clear that the body of Christ is a major component of spiritual nurture. It is also an ingredient of health and healing.

Various researchers have demonstrated that the more often a person goes to church, the better that person's health when compared to nonchurchgoers. In a study of 4,725 individuals in Alameda County, Calif., church members had lower mortality rates than others—independent of socioeconomic status and health behaviors such as smoking, drinking, physical inactivity, and obesity.

Being part of a caring community that nurtures the soul and the mind, supports intimate friendships, and encourages ethical living is of monumental significance for how people heal when faced with physical, emotional, and spiritual maladies.

It is remarkable that our church has so long neglected the substantial links between spirituality and health. Somehow we seem fearful of proclaiming and encouraging those connections.

Perhaps we fail to recognize and articulate the relationship because of its misuse. Some have given simplistic renditions of how spirituality and health are interconnected, others have overstated the evidence, and still others have propagated unhealthy forms of spirituality that don't take into account the fragile emotional, relational, and physiological dimensions of our lives.

But perhaps the primary reason we have failed to see the relationship between healing and spirituality is our own spiritual malaise. If we are not growing in our own journey with God, we will see little need to commend spirituality as a form of healing. It will be far easier to go on trusting and proclaiming secularized versions of health that rely solely on scientific knowledge. Those scientific insights are indeed part of the story of divine healing, but they are not the whole.

Failing to incorporate spirituality into healing and health not only robs us and the church of a rich resource, but the society as well. Many in our society are beginning to recognize that medical solutions alone will not meet all our needs as human beings. It is, therefore, a propitious time to remind ourselves and to proclaim with confidence those simple words of Jesus: "Men and women shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Dennis Hollinger is pastor of Washington (D.C.) Community Fellowship. This article is adapted from a presentation he gave at the Mennonite Health Assembly in 1995.

Mennonite World Conference planning continues:

Continental committees design meetings for India 1997

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—Mennonite World Conference's next assembly will meet in Calcutta, but planning for India 1997 is happening on five continents.

Committees in Europe, North America, Africa, Latin America, and Asia have each been assigned one day of "Assembly Gathered"—the six days in which all conference participants will meet in Calcutta. Their task is to plan a day of workshops, worship, and prayer that reflects the lives of the churches in their part of the world.

According to Larry Miller, MWC executive secretary, this approach follows naturally from the India 1997 theme, "Hear What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches." "We felt it was important to give most of the planning over to continental committees," Miller says. "It's always a treat to receive word from planners around the world—to get a sense of the unique message that each continent wants to offer the world church."

For the Latin Americans, this means a day focused on endurance and hopeful faith in spite of suffering and oppression. Beginning with prayers for faithfulness, hope, and conviction, Latin America Day will feature testimonials from conscientious objectors, native people, women, and youth who have resisted oppression in various forms.

Churches being renewed. European planners have chosen to communicate the need for recovery of vision in their churches. Confessing the decline of church membership in Europe in recent decades, Europe Day will feature stories of how European churches are being renewed. Activities will also celebrate the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement in Europe in the 16th century.

Asia Day activities will hinge on the "life" of Asian churches, with worship and Bible study themes such as "Life-giving Deeds, the Evidence of the Church." Since Asian Anabaptist-Mennonites are a minority in a continent of many religions, some workshops will center on living peacefully and faithfully among neighbors of different faiths.

Plans for Africa and North America Day are still being finalized.

The Indian host churches are planning the opening and closing ceremonies. Folk dancers, traditional music, flower petals, and rose water—all of which are common in Indian Anabaptist-Mennonite communities—will be featured in these services.

"Assembly Scattered," an opportunity for India 1997 participants to visit local churches throughout India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, is also being planned by host churches in several locations.

—*Marcus Shantz*

"Assembly Gathered" takes place in Calcutta Jan. 6-12, 1997. "Assembly Scattered" is scheduled in various locations before and after the gathered conference. Registration forms are available from local congregations, from Mennonite World Conference at 519 571-0060, or from MTS Travel at 800 874-9330. Reduced fees for early registrations are available until June 30.

MCC approves plan for Central States office

Hindman, Ky. (MCC)—"This facilities proposal is the culmination of more than three years of study and work," said Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Central States regional director Ron Braun in a presentation to the MCC U.S. executive committee meeting here April 26-27. "It is the most feasible and cost-effective way for our region to carry on the education, promotion, recruitment and resource generation work of MCC's worldwide mission."

Providing more space. The MCC U.S. executive committee approved a $750,000 above-budget plan to build new regional facilities in North Newton, Kan., on land donated for that purpose. The new building will provide more work space for volunteers, a more versatile warehouse facility, and space for hosting seminars, workshops, and other MCC activities.

The Central States board has committed itself to raising $400,000 for the project. Another $250,000 will come from MCC, $50,000 from MCC U.S., and some $50,000 from the sale of current Central States facilities.

In other business, the executive committee accepted a recommendation by community ministries staff that the former Atlanta unit house be sold to Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, for substantially less than the appraised value. "We are selling to a local Mennonite church that wishes to continue the work started by MCC over 30 years ago," said Community Ministries director James Logan. "The house would be used in the spirit of service by way of compassionate community resourcing and outreach."

The church is currently processing its decision about its purchase and future use of the house.

—*Deborah Fast*

'A place to go and a place to be from':

Young adults address need for community and networks of support

Newton, Kan. (GCMC-MC)—"Community is a place to go to and a place to be from. In community we can grow and become more humane in terms of how we treat each other and how we treat ourselves," Ken Hawkley told the 38 participants at a meeting of the Young Adult Network in Chicago on May 9-11.

Hawkley, director of adult-young adult education for the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Education, was the keynote speaker for the weekend that focused on the theme of "Building Networks for Support." He compared the increasing individuality of current culture to that at the time of Tower of Babel. "We cannot speak to each other because we do not know each other's language," he said. "But God showed us a way around this dilemma at Pentecost, where the disciples were given the gift to speak the languages of the world so God's word could be passed on."

• • •

Hawkley asked the audience to break into small groups to design the kind of church they would like to see in their communities. Participants mentioned elements such as a focus on reconciliation and honesty in dealing with issues like racism, sex, and drugs.

"I feel like I ask questions, but I don't get answers," said Desiree Kern from London, Ont. "I think we need to see more of the everyday reality brought into church."

"Young adults, steeped in culture, know that the church that really works is the one that goes out into the world," Hawkley said. "Young adults are positioned to lead the church community to a new level of involvement in the sense that they can teach the church how to present the gospel message in ways the world will understand."

• • •

For Beryl Jantzi, associate pastor of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church who led worship at the meeting, the event offered the opportunity to be in touch with the issues facing young adults at what he called "the grassroots" level. Jantzi said that while some in the church get frustrated with the turnover of young adults, congregations should acknowledge that this age-group is simply "at a transitory stage in their lives. We shouldn't bemoan it. It shouldn't stop us from putting young adults in positions of leadership."

Participants had the opportunity to visit various urban ministries in Chicago, including the Uptown Baptist Church, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and Jesus People, USA.

The Young Adult Network began in 1992 and meets once a year.

—*Carla Reimer*

Exploring Syria. *Damascus, Syria (MCC)*—Fourteen pastors, professors, and church leaders interested in Mennonite worship visited Syria during April as part of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worship tour. The visit was planned and hosted by Roy Hange and Maren Tyedmers Hange, MCC workers in Syria, with the assistance of Marlene Kropf, instructor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Syria worship tour participants take part in an Easter service.

His Holiness Mar Ignatious Zakka I Iwas of the Syrian Orthodox Church (left), conducted one of the services the group attended. The group visited various historical sites, convents, monasteries, churches, an iconographer, and a seminary. Although the trip focused on Orthodox Christians, participants also had contacts with Muslims and attended a service at a mosque.

Ideas for applying what they observed to Mennonite worship ranged from creating more Holy Week observances in congregations, adapting Orthodox music for use in services, using versions of Orthodox prayers in devotions, and deepening relationships with Orthodox Christians. "We were moved by the passion and richness of the liturgies that have been handed down for over a millennium," says Arthur Paul Boers, pastor of Bloomingdale (Ont.) Mennonite Church. "We came away challenged by the faith . . . of Syria's 1.2 million Christians and hopeful that the worship we witnessed could inform and inspire the church life of North American Mennonites."

Argentine workers view mission from 'inside-out'

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—Willis and Byrdalene Horst, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers in the Chaco region of northern Argentina for nearly a quarter of a century, have turned conventional mission thinking "inside-out."

"When you get [to the mission field], if you have your eyes open, God is already there working at mission. You discover that it doesn't look like what you thought it would look like. You're being converted as well as working at seeing how [the people with whom you are working] can continue their conversion," Willis says.

The Horsts, currently in the United States, will return to Argentina in August and plan to focus their work on indigenous theology, Bible teaching, and the interests of women. They also plan to continue efforts toward the rights of indigenous tribes, and, in the process, to strengthen the indigenous church.

Mission reinvented. "We don't come with all the answers. We come to learn, to see how God has been at work there and continues to work, and give witness to that," Byrdalene says. "If they're not aware that it's God who's working, [we can] make that awareness real."

According to the Horsts, a more traditional mission strategy often assumes mission workers can import their culturally based faith to a new setting and be effective. Willis strongly disagrees with this assumption. "The mission strategy must be based on what is already there. Otherwise, it's imported. The church that grows out of mission contact should be reinvented in each local situation, not transplanted," he says.

Indigenous church grows. His reasoning comes from working with four groups of indigenous peoples who have had their culture, native religion, and rights quashed for half a millennia. "We have to remember that the Toba, Pilaga, Wichi, and Mocovi Indians have been under oppressive rule for 500 years," Willis says. "It is very hard to maintain any sort of unique cultural identity when the invading culture tries to make you become what they are."

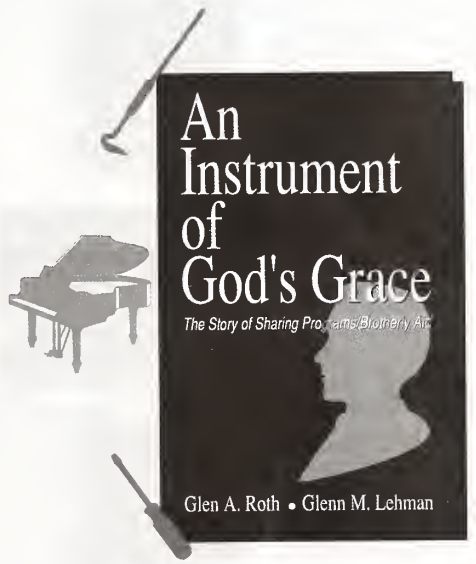
Despite a lack of staffing, Byrdalene says the indigenous church continues to grow. "It's not happening because of us. We're not doing it. It's almost happening in spite of us. They just continually reach out and carry their church with them."

Willie Horst, Mennonite Board of Missions worker in the Gran Chaco region of northern Argentina, and José Rivero Zalazar, Pilaga Indian historian and philosopher, discuss indigenous spirituality and Pilaga mythology.

Some argue that MBM should try to plant Mennonite churches in the Gran Chaco, rather than work to encourage the growth of the indigenous evangelical Christian churches. This criticism, Willis says, is erased when looking at the situation from an "inside-out" perspective.

"The inside-out mission means, too, that we all need to be converted. God is working here. We need to figure out what God's doing and be converted and participate in that."—*Christy Risser*

Q. What do a hoe, a piano, a screwdriver, and a book have in common?
A. They are all instruments designed for a specific purpose.



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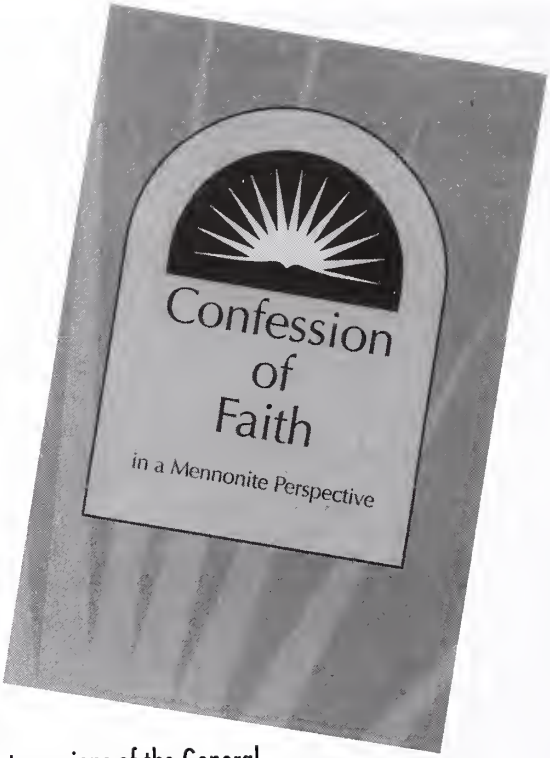

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* anchor Christian beliefs and practice in changing times.
* aid in sharing Mennonite belief and practice with other Christians, members of other faiths, as well as with people of no faith.

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective was adopted at the delegate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church meeting at Wichita, Kansas, July 25-30, 1995. The 24 articles and summary statement were accepted by both groups as their statement of faith for teaching and nurture in the life of the church.

The confession of faith is arranged in four groupings:

* Articles 1-8 explore themes common to all Christian churches.
* Articles 9-16 examine the church and its practices.
* Articles 17-23 describe the life of discipleship.
* Article 24 clarifies the reign of God.

The commentary sections were endorsed as helpful clarification and illustrative application of the articles of the confession. The accompanying unison readings for use in worship are samples of the ways this confession can be used widely in the church. Already 22,500 copies in print.

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• **Relief sales held.** Three recent relief sales to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee were held in Kansas, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania. The sale held in Hutchinson, Kan., brought in $410,000 and was attended by more than 28,000 people. The Nebraska sale raised $145,000. Around 10,000 people attended the Harrisburg (Pa.) event, and over 100 churches, schools, and stores donated $20,000 worth of coins to the Pennsylvania sale through the "Penny Power" project.

• **New appointments:**

Nancy Baker, administrative assistant in partnership and development services, Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind.

Jan Buerge, coordinator of direct participation program, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Kansas City, Kan.

Christopher A. Gill, executive director, Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich.

Lydia Harder, director, Toronto (Ont.) Mennonite Theological Centre.

Ruthann Miller, administrative assistant in human resources, Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind.

• **Coming events:**

Concert of Joni Eareckson Tada and Sandy Rios, Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa., June 27. Part of a weeklong conference for families with disabled members. More information available from 717 595-7505.

50th anniversary banquet of the Clayton Kratz Fellowship chapter of MEDA, Alderfer Auction Center, Hatfield, Pa., July 1. Historian John Ruth will speak. Reservations available from 215 721-3030.

Homecoming heritage celebration, Willow Springs Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa, Ill., Aug. 31-Sept. 1. Celebrates 160 years of gathering in Bureau County. More information from 815 646-4819.

• **Job openings:**

Administrative assistant openings, Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa. At least five secretarial openings available: U.S. peace and justice ministries department (open immediately, salaried); East Asia department (open in June, salaried); constituency ministries (open in July, salaried); communications and literature distribution (open in August, service position); Africa department (open in October, salaried). More information available from Prem Dick or Goldie Kuhns at 717 859-1151.

Campus counselor, Hesston (Kan.) College. Responsibilities include coordinating and providing college counseling efforts, providing group counseling, crisis intervention, and emergency coverage, and functioning as a member of the student life team. Qualifications include graduate level degree; conflict mediation experience preferred. Apply to the dean of students, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062.

Financial assistance awards processor and student employment coordinator, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Responsibilities include providing guidance and counsel about financial aid options and coordinating student employment program. Full-time, 12-month position. Requirements include bachelor's degree and extensive personal computer experience. Contact the human resources office at 540 432-4108.

Music minister, Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church. Responsibilities include giving general leadership to the musical life

Making a big splash. *Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (MCC)*—Mennonite Central Committee worker John Scicchitano (right) tests a pump with villagers in Burkina Faso. Scicchitano and local blacksmiths designed the Simplicity Plus pump, also called SIMPLUS—a low-cost, deep well pump that may eventually replace thousands of broken well pumps in this arid country.

Scicchitano sank the first SIMPLUS pump in November in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital. Surrounded by a crowd of men, women, and children, Scicchitano dismantled a broken pump and attached a SIMPLUS pump. With several strokes, water gushed out. The crowd was ecstatic. "A cup of water, in the name of Christ," shouted Scicchitano over the cheers of the crowd.

Over the past decades the government and aid agencies have installed approximately 20,000 deep tube wells, also called bore holes, in Burkina Faso, where finding reliable water sources is the number one priority. But according to some estimates, as many as 10,000 of the pumps that cap these wells are broken, rendering them useless. These imported pumps typically cost about $1,200. Most villages cannot afford to fix their broken pumps.

"SIMPLUS pumps are made locally with available materials, so people feel it's really their pump," says Scicchitano. "Local technicians who can make the pumps will also be able to repair them. Further, SIMPLUS pumps are affordable."

The pump design is a modification of the rower pump originally developed by George Klassen, an MCC volunteer in Bangladesh in the late 1970s. A modified form of this pump has found success among Burkinabé blacksmiths and technicians who have formed an informal cooperative to sell and promote the pumps.—*Angela Sprunger*

of the congregation for children, youth, and adults. Qualifications include college music degree or equivalent and experience. Contact the search committee chair by June 10 at (fax) 717 859-3942.

Science and math teacher, Quakertown (Pa.) Christian School. Opening in grades 6-8. Contact principal Marjorie Geissinger at 215 536-6970 for an application.

NEW MEMBERS

Clinton Frame, Goshen, Ind.: Anita Wilmoth, Eric Kilmer, Daryl King, Sheila Schmucker, and Don Thomas.

Communion Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.: Irene Bornman.

Elmira, Ont.: Maria Shantz and Pat Beckett.

Emmanuel, Gainesville, Fla.: Clayton Maxwell.

First, Iowa City, Iowa: Bob Derksen, Deb Derksen, Don Eichelberger, Abby Gingrich, Jeff Miller, Larry Oswald, Shirley Oswald, Kristin Peterson, Nathan Piper, Malcolm Ray, Beth Ray, Mo Rhodes Gingerich, Julia Stutzman, John Yutzy, and Linda Bender Yutzy.

Harrisonburg, Va.: Bill Keopanya, Nang Keopanya, and Robert Keopanya.

Kidron, Ohio: Don Neuenschwander.

Mountain View, Hickory, N.C.: Lovena Scronce and Mary McKennon.

Oak Grove, West Liberty, Ohio: Cheryl Rutschilling.

Portland, Ore.: Cindy Hines Kurfman, Amanda Lind, Charity Nussbaum, Sara Nielsen, and Ericka Histand.

Prairie Street, Elkhart, Ind.: Benjamin Yoder, Bruce Kirchner, Kathee Kime Kirchner, and Kim Kauffman.

Springs, Pa.: Willis, Greta, Wendell, and Krista Beitzel and Kathy Hale-Cooper.

West Clinton, Wauseon, Ohio: Mary Rufenacht.

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship, Philadelphia, Pa.: Jane Guerin, Sarah Blaisdell, Gil Blaisdell, Phil Stauffer, Mary Beth Stauffer, Nick Mitchell-Bennett, Lisa Mitchell-Bennett, and Cynthia Haskin.

West Union, Parnell, Iowa: Daniel Hartzler, Geovanna Ditzler, Carissa Yoder, Shawn Slaubaugh, Vince Yoder, Julia Stutzman, Jill Bender, Luke Gingerich, and Chuck Miller.

BIRTHS

Bauman, Kim Brubacher and Darrell, Elmira, Ont., Matthew Randall (second child), Jan. 6.

Bauman, Susan Isaac and Marcus, Elmira, Ont., Rebecca Elaine (first child), Oct. 2, 1995.

Bistline, Sharon Hoover and Tim, Lancaster, Pa., Kaitlyn Marlissa (second child), April 12.

Bowman, Karen Albrecht and Izzy, Elmira, Ont., Trevor David (first child), May 1.

Brenneman, Tami Webert and Jeremy, Parnell, Iowa, Laura Kathryn (first child), April 26.

Burkholder, Karen Vaselaros and Jon, Lititz, Pa., Matthew Aaron (third child), April 22.

Clayton, Heather Martin and David, Guelph, Ont., Adam David (second child), May 8.

Diller, Kay and Jerold, Cape Coral, Fla., Madelyn Kate (first child), April 21.

Fervida, Beth Gongwer and Jeff, Milford, Ind., Tanner Brian David (second child), born Dec. 26, 1995, received for adoption May 6, 1996.

Grasse, Luanne Reinford and Rodney B., Chalfont, Pa., Thomas Anthony (fourth child), May 12.

Graves, Kim Yoder and Jim, Goshen, Ind., Lauren Mackenzie (first child), May 9.

Herr, Ruth and Jeff, Strasburg, Pa., Catherine Elizabeth (second child), Feb. 2.

Hockman-Chupp, Cynthia Hockman and Kevin Chupp, Tigard, Ore., Brandon Jay (third child), May 13.

Horst, Michelle Gervais and Rob, Elmira, Ont., Tanner Gervais (second child), April 20.

Horst-Martz, Jenny-Anne and Galen, Philadelphia, Pa., Emily Peer (first child), May 9.

Kindig, Michelle Schrock and Paul, Burr Oak, Mich., Paige Marie (second child), May 15.

Lichty, Brenda Miller and Rodney, Salisbury, Pa., Daniel Alan (second child), May 8.

Martin, Cheryl Snyder and Rob, Elmira, Ont., Darcy Amber Nicole (second child), April 24.

Maust, Karen and Jesse, Meyersdale, Pa., Karl Weston (third child), Jan. 18.

Miller, Kristi Steffen and Niles, Syracuse, N.Y., Collin Jacob (second child), May 5.

North, Carolyn Burkholder and Roger, Lititz, Pa., Kirsten Elizabeth (third child), Jan. 16.

Sauder, Twila Hess and Galen, Lititz, Pa., Uriah Aaron (second child), Feb. 2.

Shantz, Sheryl Schwartzentruber and Brad, Waterloo, Ont., Mackenzie Scott (second child), April 16.

Snyder, Cindy Dettweiler and Dan, Waterloo, Ont., Derek Paul (second child), May 5.

Stoltzfus, Theresa and Brent, Bird-in-Hand, Pa., Madeline Page (third child), March 28.

MARRIAGES

Bauman-Miller: Barry Bauman, Elmira, Ont. (Elmira), and Marianne Miller, Waterloo, Ont. (Elmira), Oct. 21, 1995, by Ruth Anne Laverty.

Croissette-Miller: Scott Gregory Croissette, Jr., Perkasie, Pa., and Heather Yvonne Miller, Perkasie, Pa. (Blooming Glen), May 11, by David A. Stevens.

Hazbun-Loewen: Tony Hazbun, Geneva, Switzerland, and Tamara Loewen, Elkhart, Ind. (Prairie Street), June 3, 1995, by Richard Hire and Clare Schumm.

Heist-Troop: Maureen Heist (Neffsville), and Brian Troop, Feb. 3, by Linford King.

Hines-Zimmerman: Randy Hines, North Canton, Ohio (United Methodist), and Marla Bixler Zimmerman, North Lawrence, Ohio (Martins), April 20, by Melvin Browning and Randy Murray.

Hofstetter-Smith: Doris Hofstetter, Wooster, Ohio (Kidron), and Ken Smith, Wooster, Ohio, May 4, by Herman Myers.

Hostetter-Weaver: Kevin Hostetter, Lititz, Pa. (United Methodist), and Sharon Weaver, Lancaster, Pa. (Charlotte Street), May 11, by Frank Peachey.

Johnson-Troxel-Skaggs: Bernie Johnson and Joanne Troxel-Skaggs, North Ridgeville, Ohio (Kidron), April 27, by Mike McFarren.

Miller-Shank: Kim Miller, Sarasota, Fla. (Bay Shore), and Marlin Shank, Sarasota, Fla. (Bay Shore), May 4, by Norman Yutzy.

Moshier-Walseman: Tracy Moshier, Croghan, N.Y. (Lowville), and Jon Walseman, Croghan, N.Y. (Low-

Feast of the world. *Hesston, Kan. (HC)*—Hesston College sophomore Sukma Hippy (right) of Batam Island, Indonesia, offers some peanut sauce to sophomore Laverne Weatherby of Monetville, Ont. The sauce served as a condiment for Indonesian shish kebabs. The Hesston College community gathered Apr. 16 for its annual international festival. Guests sampled seven recipes from four continents and enjoyed cultural skits and dances. The event was planned and prepared by the college's international club, led by President Blas Rodriguez of Los Santos, Panama.

Bible studies burgeon. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—During a Thursday morning Bible Study at Elizabethtown (Pa.) High School, senior Curt Zeager (left) leads a small-group ministry time with classmates Mark Nolt, Alli Fye, and Joan Murphy. Zeager, a member of the 1995 Venezuela Summer Training Action Teams (STAT) team of Eastern Mennonite Missions, began the Bible study this fall. He says that 60 students meet every Thursday morning at the high school, and eight students have become Christians.

Derrick Garber, a member of the 1995 STAT team to Brazil, began a Friday morning Bible study at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. About 70 students attend the study each week, says Garber.

ville), May 4, by Bruce Lyndaker.

Nord-Wenger: Christopher Nord, Goshen, Ind. (Communion Fellowship), and Angela Wenger, Goshen, Ind. (Communion Fellowship), May 4, by Charles Buller.

Pawlak-Robinson: Jeff Pawlak, Elkhart, Ind. (Catholic), and Billie Jo Robinson, Elkhart, Ind. (Prairie Street), Oct. 21, 1995, by Dorothy Kratz.

Roggie-Widrick: Dawn Roggie, Lowville, N.Y. (Lowville), and Paul Widrick, Copenhagen, N.Y. (Naumburg), April 27, by Evan S. Zehr.

DEATHS

Bender, Wallace P., 73, Wellman, Iowa. Born: Oct. 26, 1922, Williamsburg, Iowa, to Irving and Ethel Yoder Bender. Died: May 13, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—wife: Lois Gingerich Bender; children: Nancy Swartz-endruber, Ruth Anne Bankston, Richard; brother and sister: Delmar, Wilma Gingerich; 9 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 15, West Union Mennonite Church, by Dean Swartzendruber and Emery Hochstetler.

Detweiler, Irene M., 84, Souderton, Pa. Born: Sept. 23, 1911, Franconia, Pa., to Joseph M. and Ellen Moyer. Died: May 10, 1996, Sellersville, Pa. Survivors—children: Marjorie R. Kooker, David K.; 6 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: David D. Detweiler (husband). Funeral and burial: May 13, Souderton Mennonite Church, by Gerald A. Clemmer, David Greiser, and Merlin Hedrick.

Gingerich, Dorothy Luella Horst, 73, Elkhart, Ind. Born: April 28, 1922, Hesston, Kan., to Gaius A. and Maggie Frey Horst. Died: March 12, 1996, Elkhart, Ind. Survivors—husband: Simon G. Gingerich. Funeral and burial: March 14, Prairie Street Mennonite Church, by Harold J. Yoder.

Gross, Priscilla L., 90, Souderton, Pa. Born: Dec. 4, 1905, Fountainville, Pa., to Abram G. and Sarah Ann Lapp Gross. Died: May 8, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivor—sister: Elizabeth L. Funeral: May 11, Souderton Mennonite Home Chapel, by Duane Bishop and Merlin Hedrick. Burial: Doylestown Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Heisey, Jannah Rochelle, 23, Lititz, Pa. Born: Nov. 13, 1972, Lancaster, Pa., to James and Ruth Ann Breneman Heisey. Died: April 28, 1996, Chester County, Pa., in an automobile accident. Survivors—parents; brother and sisters: Joel, Jolynn, Michelle; grandfather: Paul Breneman. Funeral: May 2, Lititz Mennonite Church, by Dennis Ernest and J. Clair Hollinger. Burial: Hess Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Lile, Beatrice, 62, Perryton, Tex. Born: July 21, 1933, Beaver, Okla., to E. C. and Zella Lile. Died: Jan. 24, 1996, Perryton, Tex. Survivors—mother; brother: Jerry. Funeral: Jan. 26, Perryton Mennonite Church, by Darwin Hartman. Burial: Gray Cemetery.

Mast, Ruth Ann Kauffman, 60, Sarasota, Fla. Born: Nov. 1, 1935, Plain City, Ohio, to Erwin and Anna Keim Kauffman. Died: May 11, 1996, Sarasota, Fla., of cancer. Survivors—husband: John I. Mast; children: Mary R. Makal, Clifford D., Jerald L., Jon D.; brother and sisters: Edgar Kauffman, Irene Allan, Anna Mae Miller, Jean Swartzentruber, Betty Silks, Mary Plank, Helen Thurmond, Carol Yoder; 5 grandchildren. Funeral: May 14, Bay Shore Mennonite Church, by Norman Yutzy. Burial: Palms Memorial Park.

Reynolds, Alicia Faye Showalter, 25, Baltimore, Md. Born: Aug. 5, 1970, Harrisonburg, Va., to Harley and Sadie Miller Showalter. Murdered, body was found May 7, 1996, Culpeper, Va. Survivors—husband: Mark William Reynolds; brother and sister: Patrick René, Barbara Janine. Memorial service: May 12, Park View Mennonite Church, by Shirley Yoder Brubaker, Frank Nice, and Edward Stoltzfus. Burial: May 15, Trissels Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Slabach, Mary Miller, 95, Sugarcreek, Ohio. Born: Dec. 25, 1900, Walnut Creek, Ohio, to Daniel J. A. and Suzanne Weaver Miller. Died: April 12, 1996, Walnut Creek, Ohio. Survivors—children: Albert, Monroe, Ann Hostetler, Edna Ressler, Alta Miller, Sue Mullet, Mary Schrock; brothers: Roy and Roman Miller; 27 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Crist N. Slabach (husband) and Melvin (son). Funeral: April 15, Valley View Community Church, by Chuck Jarvis and Carl Wiebe. Burial: Schlabach Family Cemetery.

Stalter, Ruth Neuhauser, 89. Born: Jan. 17, 1907, Eureka, Ill., to Amos and Katie Householder Neuhauser. Died: May 7, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivors—sons: Ronald, James; brother and sister: Tim Neuhauser, Martha Pappas; 11 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lee Stalter (husband) and John (son). Funeral and burial: May 10, Roanoke Mennonite Church, by Elmer Wyse, Rick Troyer, and Robert Harnish.

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THE LAST WORD

Living with ambiguity (3):

O freedom!

One can't read much in the New Testament without encountering the theme of freedom. This is particularly true in the writings of the apostle Paul. "For freedom Christ has set us free," he writes to the Galatians (5:1). Later he tells this church, "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters" (Gal. 5:13).

Elsewhere in his writings, Paul rails against those who would limit this freedom. As noted in last week's editorial, Paul was not happy with the church's decision to ask its members not to eat meat offered to idols. While he complied, he took a whole chapter to argue why this issue was not important (1 Cor. 8).

Freedom is not generally something one associates with the church. More popular is the stereotype that to become a Christian is to give up, if not all fun, at least the interesting part. Many see happiness as inversely proportional to one's commitment to God.

We who take this commitment seriously, who have experienced God's forgiveness and healing, know this is not true. Joy and happiness come with commitment. So does freedom.

What is this freedom to which we have been called, this freedom so consistently celebrated in the New Testament? It is:

- ***Freedom from fear of ourselves.*** Better than anyone else, I know how awful and untrustworthy I can be. Like the apostle Paul (Rom. 7:14-25), too often I find myself doing what I don't like and not doing what I want. In other words, I live with a fear of myself.

Jesus has come to set me free from that fear. Writes Paul: "All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image" (2 Cor. 3:18).

- ***Freedom from fear of others.*** So much that is evil goes on in our world: murders, rape, abuse, wars. More than ever we live in fear of each other. Adding to the tragedy of the abduction and murder of Mennonite graduate student Alicia Showalter Reynolds in early March are reports that residences of central Virginia are arming themselves—something Reynolds' family has spoken out against.

We need not live in fear of others or of what they can do to us. Jesus came "to set us free from the present evil age" (Gal. 1:4).

- ***Freedom from fear of death.*** We need not fear what others can do because Jesus has also taken care of our ultimate fear. He set "free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death" (Heb. 2:15).

None of us likes to contemplate the end of our life—in fact, I find it almost impossible. Yet, we need not fear death. As Christians, our existence is assured into the next life through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

- ***Freedom from fear of being unfaithful.*** Faced with the ambiguities and grays of our lives, the fear of being unfaithful can immobilize Christians. That fear can then keep us from exercising the freedom we have been given in Christ.

"You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free," Jesus promises (John 8:32). If we trust the Holy Spirit to lead, living with an attitude of humility and repentance, we know we can be faithful.

With freedom like this, we Christians will be the envy of those still enslaved by their passions, their fear of others, their dread of death. Paul reports in Gal. 2:4-5 that false believers became so upset by the freedom they saw in the church that they slipped in as spies and tried to put limits on this freedom.

Of course, freedom can be abused. With freedom comes the possibility of going overboard into self-gratification, even anarchy. That temptation faced the early church. "Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence," Paul wrote (Gal. 5:13). Peter echoed his words: "Do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil" (1 Pet. 2:16).

It is this potential for abuse that often makes us fear freedom itself. We are afraid of what will happen if we proclaim a gospel of freedom to others. Yet, I suspect if we're honest, this fear of what others will do comes from the tendencies we know are within ourselves.

Fear of freedom also grows as the gray areas of our lives increase. Ambiguity brings with it the call for boundaries, the need to set things in order. And while these are important, they must never obscure the overwhelming message of the gospel:

To be a follower of Jesus is to be free. Let this be the joyful, awesome, invigorating, and glorious truth we celebrate and proclaim. "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).—*jlp*

June 11, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

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Coming to terms with computer 'stuff'

A mother and her computer-passionate son dialogue about some of the issues of cyberspace: time, isolation, language, honesty, pornography, and privacy.

by Michael Sauder and Nancy Sauder

Here's the situation: Sixteen-year-old Michael Sauder is passionate about the computer. Last summer he "volunteered" at a computer repair shop—no pay, just a learning opportunity. He said, "I would gladly work 15 hours a day, six days a week for no pay just to be with computer stuff!" Over the past two years Michael has spent countless hours at the keyboard and unmentionable amounts of money on books and magazines to teach himself about computer "stuff."

The hours Michael spends on the computer are not only technically oriented—he surfs the Internet and "chats" with people on bulletin board systems. Some of the bulletin board groups he chats with are "techies"—computer nuts who are constantly helping one another with programming challenges and discussing the merits of various programs and equipment. Other groups discuss issues like abortion, capital punishment, parents, current events.

Michael's parents also like computers. They enjoy watching Michael's excitement about his discoveries, but they have some concerns about this passion. They know there is plenty of objectionable material available on the Inter-

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

'How my God met me' by Beryl Jantzi:
God's moments are rarely just individual events 6

'Perspective' by J. Robert Charles:
Some second thoughts about nationalism 8

New Mennonite churches look urban and multiracial 9

Lara Hall appointed executive secretary of WMSC 9

"If you were a musician, we would brag that you love to practice—even eight or more hours a day. Is the same thing true for the time spent on computers?"

net. That is only part of what troubles them. This dialogue between Michael and his mother, Nancy, is about these concerns.

How much time is enough—or too much?

Nancy: I expect that computer science is likely to become a career for you, so I think we should support your interest in computers. But how many hours a day? If you were a musician, we would brag that you love to practice; even eight or more hours of practice each day would seem appropriate. I'm not sure if the same thing is true for time spent on the computer and on reading about programming, equipment, and options.

I think it's important to keep your life in balance. You need physical exercise, you have to do school work, and you like to do things with the church youth group. Even when these other needs and responsibilities are fulfilled, I don't think computer-related activities should take every spare moment.

Michael: I view my time on computers not only as an enjoyable hobby but also as preparation for my future. The more time I'm working on computers, the more I'm learning. The more I currently know, the easier it will be to get a computer job now while still in high school, which will give me even more experience for jobs during and after college.

Serious hobbyists or collectors spend many hours on their hobbies, be it stamp collecting, card collecting, ham radio, photography, or anything else. My "hobby" is no different. It's easy for me to just sit down at the computer and bang away on the keyboard, losing track of the time, especially when I have specific tasks I want to complete.

For example, on a typical day, I want to read and reply to my e-mail. This can take anywhere from five to 45 minutes. Then I want to read all the messages in different forums in which we discuss anything from abortion and politics to whose school has the best theater.

After I do these everyday activities, I often want to upgrade my virus scanners or work on a program I'm writing. This is where I really get involved, and I can work for hours before I get everything done that I want to do. I am currently working on setting up a fairly large bulletin board system that will take many hours a day for many months to complete.

Although this may sound like a lot of time on the computer (and it is), I rarely regret the time spent. It's the hobby which I seriously enjoy and pursue. It's satisfying to shut off the computer late at night and be able to list all the things I've accomplished that day.

Isolation from others

Nancy: Sometimes we don't see anything but the back of your head for hours while you are on the computer. When we set up the computer system at home we considered putting it in the basement or in your bedroom where it wouldn't take up "family" space. But I'm glad we put it in the hallway next to the dining room instead. I feel like I can stay in touch a little better with what is happening on the computer, and I have learned some of the jargon from looking over your shoulder and asking about things in the course of doing things around the house. Computer "nuts" get really absorbed in their screen—I'm glad you are within earshot of family life while you work on the computer.

Michael: I've never really felt isolated while on the computer, perhaps precisely because you put the computer out in the open rather than in the basement or in my bedroom. But I prefer private, quiet places away from the normal activity. If the computer were in my bedroom, it would be much more convenient. I would have immediate access to all my computer books, magazines, and extra computer hardware in my room without needing to run between the computer and my room. Other people in the

house wouldn't need to hear the clicking of my keyboard or the annoying beeps and buzzes that come from my computer when things don't function right. And most of all, I could work late at night in my room without bothering anyone else.

Language on bulletin board systems

Nancy: I have looked over your shoulder often enough to see a lot of language on the screen that makes me uncomfortable. There is profanity, of course, but what bothers me even more is the aggressive and disrespectful tone in a lot of the postings. The language is harsh. I think using that kind of language, even on the computer screen, can make you become more aggressive and disrespectful toward others in real life. The language we hear (or see) becomes part of our thought life, if not our own vocabulary. I want you to be aware of how the bulletin board chats can affect your thought life and challenge you to be sure that your online language is consistent with your Christian commitment.

Michael: The way I see it, the language used on computers is no worse than that on TV, movies, books, or even in my Mennonite high school. The computer world is made up of people in society, and if people in society swear, then they'll swear on the computer too. As for the harsh and disrespectful tone, I agree that it may be a little worse on computers, but I believe that the majority of people communicate in a calm, respectful manner.

Honesty on the Internet

Nancy: I'm curious about how honest people are on the bulletin board systems. Do they give accurate information when they register with the system operator? It seems it would be so easy to claim to be older or younger and to pose as someone you really aren't. Honesty is just as important in cyber-conversation as it is in face-to-face conversation.

Michael: True, it's easy to enter 11/02/56 instead of 11/02/79 for a birthdate, but most system operators, if they have adult areas on their bulletin board systems, will voice-verify adults by calling them over the phone and asking them to confirm their identity. Many even require written confirmation, often with a photocopy of some kind of photo identification.

One of the things that attracts many people to the Internet is that they can be whoever they want to be. An overweight person can pretend to be thin, and an unattractive person can pretend to be beautiful. But it's generally an unspoken rule that no one really believes any of this stuff.

At the same time that computers can hide people from their real identity, it can also serve as a way for people to meet others, regardless of looks, people whom they would not normally become friends with. Handicapped, deformed, or just plain unattractive people love this, and computers can become their only world because it's where their friends are. It also lets shy people communicate unlike they would in real life.

Pornography on-line

Nancy: It is really scary to see the options available on the Internet. I've seen lists of chat rooms that include adult humor and flirtation. I would guess there are hundreds of chat rooms available to people who are linked to the Internet, and I know some of them are devoted to awful, sinful topics.

Computer programs are available for parents to install on home computers to block out "adult"

(continued on page 4)

A code of ethics for computer users

Being involved with computers carries with it responsibility on my part. This is a list of the standards I will operate by:

- I will try to keep my life balanced and remember that I have other activities to participate in. I will not spend all my time on the computer.
- I will not become involved with pornographic pictures or other "adult" activity online.
- I will try to express myself in a honest way online, not leading others to think I am something that I am not.
- I will stand by my Christian ethics in the language I use online.
- I will keep my priorities straight, completing school work and other activities before engaging in computer activities.
- I will respect the privacy of other people online, just as I expect them to respect mine.
- I will not engage in illegal hacking activities, including attempting to access places to which I am not suppose to have access or attempting to get into other people's personal files.

— Michael Sauder

In Philippians, Paul gives people advice about standards for living the Christian life. I'm sure he'd have something to say about cyberspace were he to write today.

materials so their children can't get the objectionable material. We have chosen not to buy one of the programs for several reasons. First, I expect that just knowing the program has been installed would become a challenge for you to figure out how to crack the code and break into the program to defeat the block. You know far more about computer programming than I do, so I have no idea how to select a Michael-proof program!

Second, I believe it is much better for you to develop your own standards about the chat groups that you will participate in and the pictures that you will look at. I understand teenage curiosity about such things, but I also worry about how pornography addictions sneak up on people. I believe that since you are sixteen, we have to rely on you to set your own limits, with the benefit of our discussions about the issue.

The privacy you have on the computer at home could make it seem like there is no real harm in exploring the "adult" stuff on the Internet. Again, I want to challenge you to remember what Scripture says about the things we put in our minds. Paul writes, "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Phil. 4:8). In that letter Paul gives the people advice about standards for living the Christian life. I'm sure he would have something to say about cyber-conversation if he were to write that letter today.

Michael: I see similarities between this issue and language. Adult stuff online is nothing more than an extension of the real world. The computer world was created by adults, and therefore it contains adult stuff. There really isn't much more on the Internet than anywhere else, such as TV, book stores, movies, or even the talk at school.

You're probably right about my trying to get past the program. If I understand correctly how the program works, I can have it bypassed within 30 seconds—as could any other computer-knowledgeable teen.

Although I know this is a major issue to many, I feel that the media has blown this out of proportion and that it's not as bad as it's portrayed.

What about hacking or accessing other people's files?

Nancy: It must be very satisfying to find your way through a computer program and to figure out how to make the computer do what you want it to do. Like I said earlier, I think you would enjoy the challenge of figuring out how to defeat any block we might put on the computer. So I need to ask: Are there limits or boundaries that an ethical computer user will not violate, even in the pursuit of technical expertise?

Michael: "Hacker" can be defined two ways. It originally referred to a person who spent lots of time on computers—programming, debugging, and generally working extensively inside the system. A second way of defining it is as a person who breaks into computer systems or other people's files—sometimes destroying the system, often on purpose.

It's unfortunate that some hackers delight in causing damage and chaos. They often break into systems and start destroying the system by deleting important files or changing configurations. But there's also a "good" side to hacking. A software company recently issued a challenge: find any security holes in this program, report it, and we'll pay you some money. The company did this because it wanted to write a program that had as few holes as possible. They figured that the chances of "good" hackers turning in security holes would far outweigh the risk of "bad" hackers finding and exploiting them.

Despite all the "bad" stuff out there, computers can be used for many great purposes, including education and entertainment. We should not let anything scare us away from accessing the incredible resources that computers offer.

Michael Sauder and Nancy Sauder live in Lancaster, Pa. They attend Neffsville Mennonite Church. Michael is a sophomore at Lancaster Mennonite High School, and Nancy is a trained mediator completing a degree in health care management.

"Come, let us return to the Lord; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up. . . . Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord."
—Hosea 6:1, 3a, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Between the Rock of Peace and the Hard Place of Outreach (May 21). I would suggest that it is not at all insignificant that the congregation in the eye of the storm of the peace church and military personnel debate is predominately African-American. Unlike many submissive converts to the Mennonite Church, members of Calvary Community Church seem to know that the integration of faith and life is far more complicated and ambiguous than the rules of any game. Since one can never speak of Christ outside of culture, perhaps ethnic Mennonites who advocate military disarmament can learn something important about cultural disarmament from other "ethnics" in the church.

Readers of *Gospel Herald* must also recognize that J. Denny Weaver's article in the same issue, ***Making Sure Which Game We Are Playing,*** cannot be pried apart from his article, ***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** which appeared in the Jan. 23 issue.

In the latter, Weaver makes a convincing case that Mennonite distinctives of discipleship, community, and nonresistance have been held together by the ethnic rather than the ethical memory of the denomination. He worries that as the ethnic markers and cultural insularity of the church cease to be the sociological glue of the Mennonite community, the historic theological distinctives of the tradition will be lost as minority believers are assimilated into the host culture.

Weaver's theology almost implies that the distinctives of the Anabaptist vision fell out of the sky like stones from heaven and thus have a universal validity for Christian theology. Even Jesus becomes a good Anabaptist. A hermeneutics of suspicion applied to Weaver reveals what he would prefer to conceal: Anabaptist theology, like the theologies of Christendom, is likewise cultural.

Normative Anabaptism emerged from a very specific set of cultural realities and historical circumstances. I would suggest that Weaver's call to discipleship and peace may be more dependent upon the "ethnic glue" than he would care to admit. These distinctives cannot be easily separated from the sectarian, perfectionistic, peasant culture from which they were constructed. They cannot be transported onto the public churches and institutions of late 20th-century Mennonitism as if they were not born from the body and blood of another historical reality.

Weaver fails to acknowledge that an aging ethnicity may be the guts rather than the glue of modern Anabaptism, that its distinctives may be as much about blood as Bible, and that the obedience demanded by Anabaptist discipleship may have more to do with fidelity to family systems than to faith. This sober acknowledgment need not inhibit the celebration of cultural and ethnic identity if through it all we remember that God is Other.

Weaver, like many Mennonites and members of other small, ethnic religions, is quite driven by the need to protect and promote a "distinct identity." When the ethnic glue begins to crack, it becomes convenient to reach for ideological glue in the name of normative Christian ethics.

But in an age in which ethnic cleansings are linked to ideological purity and political punishment, and at a time when even good Anabaptists can become Bosnians and Serbs of the spirit in the names of identity, accountability, and church discipline, perhaps it is time to confess that we modern Anabaptists need to practice cultural disarmament as earnestly as we advocate laying down weapons of steel. Since our peace has destroyed many, maybe we can best seek the peace of the city by humbly confessing that we too are part of the great church of saints and sinners—but mostly sinners desperately needing God's grace.

Scott Holland
McKeesport, Pa.

How encouraged we were when we read the letter signed by the 75 ministers ("Readers Say," Apr. 9). We Mennonites seem to be heading in the same direction as some of the mainline denominations, so we rejoice when men of God call us to repentance.

It is encouraging to know that there are still many leaders in our denomination who are concerned with following God's Word and being open to the Holy Spirit's work in their lives. We appreciate the willingness of these ministers to attend a Promise Keepers meeting and to call for revival among us.

Lowell & Laura Kurtz
Friedens, Pa.

How my God met me (9):

God's moments are rarely just

God touches individuals in order to touch the community. When others are on the journey with us, they share in the grace which comes from encounters with God.

by Beryl Jantzi

Our daughter Rose was born almost four years into our marriage. Margo had a good pregnancy. She continued working almost up to the time of delivery. When the contractions started, we went first to the elementary school near Harrisonburg, Va., where she taught, and she hurriedly wrote down lesson plans while I kept track of her contractions on the chalkboard until they were four minutes apart. Rose was born three hours after we arrived at the hospital.

The ecstasy of watching life which we created come to us is a gift beyond description. Witnessing the birth of our daughter was a spiritual experience—a "God encounter." Psalm 139:13-14 took on new meaning for me: "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Given the fact that this first birthing experience was so smooth, we were ill-prepared for the events surrounding our second pregnancy and birth. By this time we were living in Lancaster, Pa., and everything was going according to schedule. But complications arose in the seventh month which caused great concern for us all. After an emergency call to the doctor, we were told to get to the hospital immediately. We scrambled to find childcare for our one-year-old and headed to the hospital.

A barrage of tests determined that the placenta had settled low in the uterus, blocking the birth canal and making it susceptible to further bleeding. Unless it moved on its own, a Caesarean section would be required. Meanwhile, Margo was ordered to bed for rest to reduce the risk of further bleeding and complications. This was to require some dramatic readjustments to our lives and the lives of many others.

With Rose just beginning to explore her world, we knew help was needed. My mother dropped everything to come help us and once again put her mothering and grandparenting skills to use.

The help didn't end there. Our church rallied around us with meals and visits. Women from the congregation came to give my mother breaks from her responsibilities. This lasted five weeks. During this time we were alarmed with another serious episode which sent us to the hospital uncertain of what would happen. Again Margo was hooked up to monitors and closely observed. The baby appeared to be fine. After two days the situation stabilized, and Margo returned home to her sofa bed in the living room—the epicenter of family activity during this five-week vigil.

The feeling of helplessness was overwhelming. Nothing could be done except wait and pray.

Once again the monotony of the waiting was interrupted. When we discovered the bleeding, we grabbed the already-packed overnight bag and headed off to the hospital. It was the morning of Oct. 20, and Margo wasn't due until Nov. 4. Our doctor reassured us that everything would be fine, but these words of comfort rang hollow in the midst of the machines, monitors, and continuous activity surrounding us.

One learns about trust and faith when that is all there is to hold onto. Our prayers were simple and concise: "Keep our child safe." As the morning progressed, monitors began to show increased signs of stress for the baby. The decision became obvious to all. The baby would have to be taken to avoid further trauma. Even in the face of the building uncertainty and anxiety, we felt a certain relief knowing we were going to finally get beyond the waiting and the wondering.

Everything flowed like a well-organized barn raising. Within 15 minutes of the decision, we were in the operating room surrounded by surgeons, nurses, anesthesiologists, pediatricians, assistants, and student nurses. As routine as this must have been for them, their presence was overwhelming and reassuring for us as we waited to welcome our child into the world.

I cannot help but imagine that there was another gathering in that already crowded space. We felt the support of friends and family in prayer on our behalf as well as a divine and comforting presence.

In a matter of minutes, Melissa Dawn was drawn out of the womb by the surgeon and into the arms of the pediatrician. We finally got our chance to welcome her once she was declared well and whole.

The author, Beryl Jantzi, with his two daughters, Melissa (left) and Rose.

What did I learn about God and myself through this experience? Several things:

From crisis to joy. What started as a crisis ended in joy. This is not always the case; it becomes one of the great theological paradoxes of the faith. Why do some crises end joyfully while others end in tragedy? Our journey was filled with frustrations and uncertainty; however, we did gain a sense of perspective and respect for life by going through this crisis that we could not have learned otherwise.

Never alone. As others joined in prayer on our behalf, there was a broader community investment of a spiritual and an emotional dimension. Moments in which one experiences God are rarely isolated or individual events. God touches individuals in order to touch the broader community. When others are on the journey with us, they share in the grace which comes through these encounters with God.

Milestones of faith. This family event will be remembered and talked about in the coming years. It is already part of our oral tradition; now this article makes it a part of our written tradition as well. Perhaps we move too quickly from these encounters and forget to preserve them as part of our family history.

When the children of Israel passed through the Jordan River, Joshua commanded a member of each tribe to pick up a stone, which became part of a community altar. This pile of stone commemorated God's faithfulness on their journey. "When your children ask their parents in time to come, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall let your children know, 'Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.' " The purpose of building this altar was that "all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, and so that you may fear the Lord your God forever" (Josh. 4:22-24).

Like the Israelites, we need to build our altars to God. These serve as reminders of God's faithfulness in years past. The modern-day equivalent of this pile of stones may be to plant a tree or to establish an endowment.

This written testimonial becomes my pile of stones. It will be added to our other family memory enhancers, such as baby shoes, videos, and photographs. These will serve as reminders of important encounters—both human and divine.

Beryl and Margo Jantzi live in Ephrata, Pa. They have two children, Rose and Melissa. Beryl is copastor at Akron Mennonite Church, and Margo is a homebound educator for the Ephrata School District and a freelance photographer.

Some second thoughts about nationalism

by J. Robert Charles

Is nationalism—that loyalty to one's country which has been around for centuries and shows no signs of withering away soon—a curse or a blessing in today's world?

At first glance this question seems like a no-brainer. Whether one has been reading the headlines or the Bible (or both) in recent years, the answer seems more than obvious.

Ethnic and national conflicts have been making violent visitations around the world, destroying countries and sending the United Nations on countless impossible errands. Since the end of the Cold War, nationalism has further divided—not healed—an already fragmented world. In the name of self-determination, every nation seems to want its own state, many taking up arms to achieve this.

For Christians—especially pacifist ones—nationalism strikes at the heart of the gospel. It implicitly denies that God created, and Christ died, for all persons. Modern nation-states claim competing monopolies of divine favor. Each one demands supreme loyalty and sacrifice from citizens, defines enemies and friends, and sets rituals like flag salutes and national anthems.

In short, the modern nation aspires to be, in Fichte's words, the individual's only passport to eternity. This sounds like idolatry—impure and simple.

Based on all this, not so long ago, I would have answered my rhetorical question with the only answer I thought it deserved: nationalism is bad. It is a sin against an international spirit in politics and the universalism of the gospel that should guide the church's life and witness.

Lately, however, I've begun to have second thoughts. While my earlier judgment has not been completely overturned, my perspective on nationalism now contains more nuances, more "it depends" than was true previously.

First, I've come to realize that today's nationalism comes in two strains, one less virulent than the other. *Civic nationalism*—which defines the nation as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens of many ethnic backgrounds united under political practices and values—has much to commend it. In fact, it parallels in some ways my vision of the church.

Ethnic nationalism—the idea that a nation can be formed around common roots in language, religion, race, customs, and traditions—however, breeds intolerance and xenophobia. This strain is truly "the measles of the human race," as Albert Einstein put it.

Second, I've shed some illusions about the supposed antidote to nationalism. Internationalism sounds great and oh-so-enlightened. But it can be a form of cultural imposition of the larger, more powerful and highly organized upon the smaller, weaker, and more informal. Through internationalism the rich, satisfied nations of the North and West—and their citizens and private organizations—invariably cloak their own interests and privileges in altruistic "world order" and "interdependence" talk.

Overseas mission experience and studies in international politics have increased my awareness of this beam in our eye as we look and work overseas. (I'm still not sure how to remove it, however, without causing total blindness.) But I am now less quick to judge "nationalist" specks in others' eyes as they look back at us, exemplary cosmopolitans that we think we are.

A final impetus for my questioning whether nationalism is really all that bad is hard to pinpoint, but it originates close at hand, in Canada.

Call it envy of a humanitarian world role, which seems to allow Canadian Mennonites to affirm their nation without compromising their faith—a feat long unimaginable south of the 49th parallel.

Or call it trying to take seriously Canadian Mennonite concerns when it comes to North American structures and programs. If I understand the grievance correctly, it is that U.S. Mennonites have too fuzzy a sense of national identity to even acknowledge that Mennonites in Canada possess, or might even desire, a markedly different one.

As a result, we to the south consistently confuse national, continental, and international agendas in church conferences and agencies. Here the wolf of American nationalism appears in the sheep's clothing of Mennonite internationalism.

What's the solution? "Claim your own national identity, form your own national conference, then take us seriously as your equals!" seems to be the message we're hearing from Canada. It remains to be seen whether U.S.Mennonites can respond adequately to what still sounds like a bewildering, perhaps slightly heretical, exhortation.

This much is sure, however. Failure to even try to respond might just bring the recently launched GC-MC integration process to a grinding halt. Yet Mennonites in the U.S. will only make this attempt if and when we agree to entertain second thoughts on nationalism.

Red, brown, yellow, black, and white:
New Mennonite churches look urban and multiracial

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—The Mennonite Church grew by nearly 12 percent in the Vision '95 era, according to 1985-95 statistics compiled recently by evangelism and church development staff from Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

"One out of seven Mennonite Church congregations was started since 1985," says Allan Yoder, who directs MBM's evangelism and church development efforts. "A new Mennonite Church was started every 18 days, [while] 12,000 people worship each week in a new Mennonite church."

Total Mennonite Church membership grew from 99,719 members in 980 congregations in 1985 to 111,672 members in 1,099 congregations at the end of 1995, according to the report.

"The Mennonite Church is in the top 25 percent of denominational membership growth in North America," says Yoder.

Urban areas. The stereotype of Mennonites as a rural, ingrown people may still plague the Mennonite Church. But the reality presents a stark contrast: 69 percent of new Mennonite Church congregations started in urban areas.

Also, a large percentage of the new congregations consists of nonwhite and non-English-speaking groups. English served as the language of worship in only 61 percent of the congregations included in the report. New Mennonite churches worship in American Indian, Ethiopian, Chinese, Indonesian, and other languages or dialects. Spanish alone served as the primary language in 21 percent of new churches.

New Mennos. New churches composed of whites accounted for barely a majority, 54 percent. Today's new Mennonite churches consist of Hispanics (22 percent), blacks (9 percent), Asian and Pacific Islanders (7 percent), Indian groups (3 percent), and many others.

This change in the composition of the Mennonite Church runs parallel to a transformation occurring in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by the middle of the next century "minority" groups will make up 47 percent of the U.S. population. The white, non-Hispanic population will drop off after reaching a peak of nearly 208 million people sometime around 2030. At the same time, the population of blacks, Indian groups, Asians, and Hispanics will continue to surge.

In addition, 60 percent of Mennonite Church conferences in North America grew by more than 10 percent in the decade since 1985. Two of those conferences—Lancaster and Pacific Southwest—experienced a net growth of more than 25 congregations during the decade.—*Tom Price*

Hall appointed executive secretary of WMSC

Elkhart, Ind. (WMSC)—Lara Hall of Scottdale, Pa., will serve as the next executive secretary of the Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC) of the Mennonite Church.

Hall was appointed by the WMSC executive committee in its meeting May 16-18. She will succeed Marian Hostetler, who announced her resignation effective Sept. 1.

For the past three years, Hall has served at the Mennonite Publishing House as youth curriculum editor and assistant editor for the *Adult Bible Study Guide.*

A native of Archbold, Ohio, Hall graduated from Goshen College and earned a master of divinity degree at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in 1993. She has administrative experience in several Mennonite Church agencies and served as an administrative intern at Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries during her seminary training.

Minimizing alienation. "I'm excited about looking intentionally at what it means to be a Mennonite woman in the 90s in a way that respects where we've come from and where we hope to go," Hall said about the position.

Because of integration, the committee appointed the new executive secretary to a three-year term or "until WMSC ceases to exist, whichever is sooner."

"Whatever shape women's groups take in an integrated Mennonite church, we need to take into account our task of minimizing alienation," Hall said, noting divisions between men and women, people from diverse heritages, and women of different ages. "I'm excited about projects that can emerge from collaboration and cooperation," she added.

Lara Hall, next executive secretary of the Women's Missionary and Service Commission of the Mennonite Church

Anabaptist women talk about 'the life among us'

Winnipeg, Man. (Meetinghouse)—All the senses were engaged at the third conference of "Anabaptist Women Doing Theology" on May 9-11 at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), Winnipeg, Man. The conference was sponsored by CMBC, Concord College, and Mennonite Central Committee.

Anabaptism and feminism. Papers by theologians and scholars formed the basis for discussion of an Anabaptist feminist hermeneutic. Respondents to each paper questioned and critiqued the meaning of such a hermeneutic.

Nadine Pence Frantz, professor of theology at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., indicated that a reading of a particular biblical text is shaped by human experience and will be read differently each time it is read or written. Ruth Krall, professor of religion and psychology at Goshen (Ind.) College, gave five guiding principles for interpreting Anabaptist Christian faith from a feminist perspective. She said that justice and peacemaking are at the heart of the biblical text's message.

Inclusivity. In her paper on language and images of God, Veronica Dyck challenged the 225 attenders to consider changing their thinking as well as their language to be more inclusive. She said that Jesus' use of "Father" often indicated an intimacy of relationship between Jesus and God rather than a description of or proper name of God, adding that many of the words associated with God in Hebrew are feminine in form.

Eleanor Epp-Stobbe encouraged women to think of God in new ways within the community. She reasoned that women are not the only ones who sense exclusivity in the church and added that there needs to be more connectedness within the community.—*Susan Brandt*

Mennonite colleges and seminaries hold commencement exercises

Scottdale, Pa.—Graduates of Mennonite colleges and seminaries closed their books and celebrated the end of their studies at commencement exercises in April and May. Besides those listed below, graduation exercises were also recently held at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., Bluffton (Ohio) College, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man., and Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont.

Eastern Mennonite University. Academic dean Lee F. Snyder, who is leaving to become president of Bluffton College, gave the graduation address at EMU's 78th annual commencement on Apr. 28. "The work that you have done, the commitments that you've made, the conviction that God has a plan and purpose for you will provide the confidence by which you may—like the character in Annie Dillard's book *The Living*—'fling yourself loose into the stars,' " said Snyder.

President Joseph L. Lapp conferred degrees on the 251 members of the 1996 graduating class, and the first group of 36 students finishing EMU's adult degree completion program earned bachelor of science degrees in management and organizational development.

Goshen College. "Living Inside Hope: A Baseline for the 21st Century" was the title chosen by speaker John Lapp, executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee, at Goshen College's commencement. "It will be easy for you to become engulfed by the meaningless routines of much of contemporary culture," Lapp told the 244 graduates at the 98th commencement on May 19. "But if you are true to the Goshen College vision, you will choose to live inside hope. You will be a participant in the body of Christ, the hope of the world. You will actively work to pull the promised future into the present."

The graduation ceremony completed a weekend of activities including department receptions, an art exhibit, and an annual senior program.

Hesston (Kan.) College president Loren Swartzendruber (left) presents an associate of arts diploma to graduate Ulises García of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Hesston College. Hesston College granted associate of arts degrees to 156 graduates in commencement exercises on May 19. Academic dean Paul Keim conferred degrees on the 86th graduating class. On Saturday, 39 graduates of the nursing program received pins, and eight graduates of the pastoral ministries program were honored during a commissioning service.

Evangelist Myron S. Augsburger spoke at commencement on "Extending the Vision." "Vision means being called up to something greater than I am," Augsburger said. "We aren't caught up in the right or the left or movements that are partisan or fracture society. Neither do we move down some road to some ideology that narrows life down and boxes it in. We are daring to say there is another movement. I can select from either or reject from either. I am free to be a member of the kingdom of Christ."

Rosedale Bible Institute. Twenty students received diplomas or certificates from Rosedale Bible Institute on May 16. Dwight Gascho, father of graduate Vicki Gascho and president of Scheurer Hospital in Pigeon, Mich., delivered the commencement address to the graduating class and an audience of 250 people. Gascho proposed the "three R's" of the class theme of "Standing Firm"—responsibility, relationship, and renewal. President Leon Zimmerman and interim academic dean Elmer Lehman presented the graduates with their diplomas.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Forty-five students graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on May 24. Jonathan Larson, a Mennonite mission worker in Botswana from 1981-94, based his commencement speech on John 12. He told stories from the Bible and from his mission experiences of "descent into darkness" and "rising to fruitfulness."

As dean Willard Swartley introduced the class, he noted several distinctions of the group. It included, he said, "the mother of a ten-day-old child, a teacher in a theological school in India, the director of a Bible college in New Zealand, a former board member who is the mother of a current student . . . a medical doctor who will soon be the general secretary of the Mennonite Church, and the president of Mennonite World Conference."

Eastern Mennonite Seminary. The 29-member class of 1996 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary graduated on Apr. 28. John P. Williams, Jr., general superintendent of the Evangelical Friends Church–Eastern Region, gave the commencement address.

Sixteen of the group received master of divinity degrees, nine were awarded master of arts in church leadership or master of arts in religion degrees, and seven earned one-year certificates in biblical or pastoral studies. About 40 percent of the class will be involved in pastoral ministry, and the remaining class members plan to pursue further schooling, chaplaincy work, overseas mission, or other church-related responsibilities.

Headmistress and students at Njaliha primary school in northern Swaziland. Mennonite Central Committee nurse Patricia Amroski taught sexual responsibility and AIDS awareness classes in this and 13 other schools.

MCC nurse taught AIDS awareness in Swaziland

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—As a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) public health nurse in rural Swaziland, Patricia Amroski observed the toll AIDS is exacting in that tiny southern African country. In her work with home-based health care for people with AIDS, Amroski saw more than 50 AIDS patients in 1995; most died within that year. A recent study indicates 22 percent of Swazis ages 15-50 carry the virus that causes AIDS.

Amroski, who recently completed a three-year term with MCC, believes future generations of Swazis must make lifestyle changes to lessen their vulnerability to the deadly disease. Advocating lifestyle changes led Amroski into the murky area of promoting cultural change. But change is necessary, Amroski says, because the status quo will prove catastrophic.

As part of her health education work, Amroski carried a message of sexual responsibility and AIDS awareness to 14 schools. "Everyone has heard the word 'AIDS,' but Swazi youth have little accurate information about how it is spread," says Amroski. "In Swazi culture, talk about sex is taboo," Amroski says.

Sexual responsibility. Most Swazi churches preach abstinence outside of marriage and that Christians don't get AIDS. But, says Amroski, "what children are taught doesn't always match what they see." In the area where Amroski lived, about half the children are born out of wedlock. "I told students the body is a wonderful gift from God to them and they are responsible to care for this gift," Amroski relates. While stressing abstinence, she also provided information on disease prevention.

As a woman and an outsider, Amroski didn't feel she could address the issue of male promiscuity, which she sees as the root cause of the rapid spread of AIDS in Swaziland, a traditionally polygamous society. "Things won't change until men change, because the culture allows men to have many sex partners," asserts Amroski. "But I think in the future the young men in my classes will be more open to discussing sexual responsibility than their fathers and grandfathers are."

Increasing openness. Amroski also encouraged mothers to talk with their sons. Amroski stressed to women that they "don't have to have sex," and can choose to say no to men. Amroski has modest expectations about her efforts. "If only a few students begin to question the status quo, to see they have some sexual responsibility and some control over what happens to them, I'll consider that success." She finds hope in the Swazi nurses who are continuing the work she started. Now that she has broken ground and as the AIDS epidemic worsens, people have become more open in talking about the issue.

Swaziland has been faced with the spread of AIDS later than some other African nations. In Uganda and in Zambia, behavior has changed as a result of education, and the impact of the disease and rate of new infections has slowed.—*Pearl Sensenig*

A Mennonite wasn't the only one taking a "modified oath of allegiance" to the United States at a recent ceremony in San Antonio, Tex. Saul Murcia Manzanares, a native of Colombia and coordinator of Voluntary Service for Mennonite Board of Missions, became a U.S. citizen April 30.

But Murcia, who took a modified oath of allegiance as a person not willing to bear arms or perform noncombatant service in the U.S. armed forces when required by law, was not alone. Some 52 other new U.S. citizens joined him in taking this modified, pacifist oath. "Before I came here today, I thought I was going to be the only one who was going to take a modified oath," he said. "It turned out that there were 53 people declaring a pacifist stand. I guess that proves there is hope for us and that peace should be part of our world today."

Murcia and his wife, Rebecca Thatcher, attend Austin Mennonite Fellowship.

—*Mennonite Board of Missions*

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The MCC U.S. Washington office received an 'intriguing phone call' in early May from the office of U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Furse of Oregon. Furse's office called in the wake of House and Senate defense committees' votes to increase 1997 military spending—by $13 billion more than the $254.4 billion requested by the Clinton administration. Furse hoped to submit an amendment redirecting this additional amount toward proposals submitted by humanitarian groups. Thus the phone call to the MCC office.

Director Daryl Byler took the question to an adult Sunday school class at Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan. Class members made suggestions ranging from investing in education to paying U.S. dues to the United Nations.

Unfortunately, Rep. Furse never got the chance to submit the ideas she collected. The House Rules Committee prevented amendments from being offered to the House bill.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

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Two groups of quilters—one of Mennonites and one of prisoners—met together recently. Ruth Hess of Kingston (Ont.) Mennonite Fellowship taught a quiltmaking class for the women of the Kingston Prison for Women, where about 12 women appliqued blocks of colorful butterflies. The St. Jacobs Mennonite Church Women's Missionary and Service Commission agreed to quilt the blocks and then traveled to meet the women who had made the blocks.

Hess says the butterflies on the now-finished quilt symbolize freedom—"women in prison express their longing for it, and women from St. Jacobs leave the familiar to step into the world of women in prison."—*WMSC Voice*

Argentine Mennonite works for peace, justice

Buenos Aires, Argentina (MBM)—For the past 13 years, the Argentine people have known democracy. Before this time, a military government ruled with an iron hand and crushed opposition whenever it arose. In this new era, Juan Angel "Tito" Guiterrez, former president of the Argentine Mennonite Conference, is calling for justice without fear of immediate governmental opposition.

Although the government's current leaders conduct democratic elections and allow the people a voice, Gutierrez still sees a great need for working toward peace and justice in the country. His role, he says, is to encourage the church to reflect upon what that means for it in the coming years.

"Most churches have a social project they work on in their community," Gutierrez says. "But we need more."

Mennonite Central Committee and the Argentina Mennonite Conference, which is supported in part by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), have hired Gutierrez to create and implement programs that promote peace and justice in Argentina.

During this year, Gutierrez wants to discover the answers to four specific questions for the churches in the Mennonite Church in Argentina:

- What are the churches actually doing?
- What human resources exist in the churches?
- What regional projects could the church start?
- Are the projects part of the biblical testimony and of living the Christian life?

Gutierrez has a list of projects the church could begin—a children's feeding program, food distribution for poor families, programs for drug addicts and people with AIDS, and work for the rights of indigenous people.

Gutierrez says that the churches are involved in some projects currently. The Floresta Mennonite Church in Buenos Aires created a home for older women. Hogar Belen, translated Bethlehem Home, houses several women who would otherwise have nowhere to go. Gutierrez says the project, started at the initiative of MBM workers Delbert and Frieda Erb, appears to be successful.

A system of mutual aid also exists in the church. For 15 years, a fund has helped church members who are temporarily out of work or carry an unexpected financial burden.

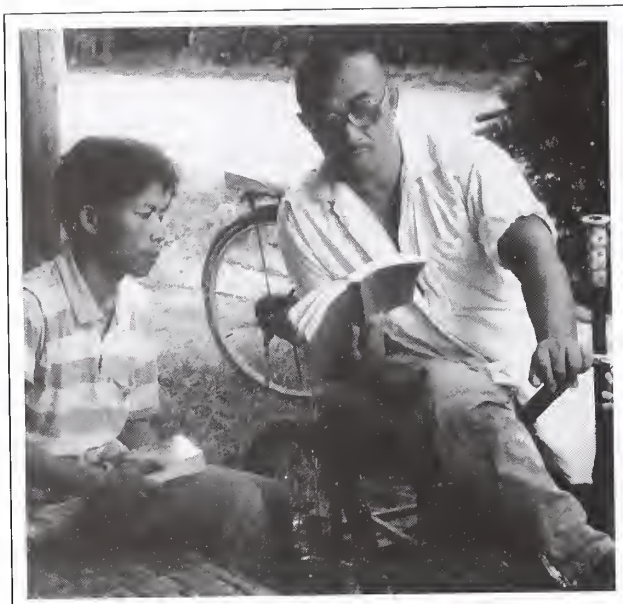
Gutierrez wants the churches in the Buenos Aires area to consider creating a place for the street children. "Because of the economic situation for the poor, there are a lot of children living on the street right now. They have no homes, and they beg or steal to eat and survive," he says.

"Ideas like this [the place for street children] cannot be forced on the congregations. They have to take ownership for themselves," Gutierrez says. "I am simply sharing these as concerns with the congregations."

Another way Gutierrez is working at issues of peace and justice in the church is through his work at a Buenos Aires radio station. Radio Abierta, translated Open Radio, "is not all about religion, but it does try to have Christian ethics and Christian viewpoints," he says.

In March, Gutierrez focused on the rights of women in Argentina through his live program on the station. "I want to promote the status of justice so that women have the same rights as men," Gutierrez says. During the week, his daily show dealt with issues of the abuse of women, violence in the family, and the political rights of women.

"I want to [through the radio program] allow people to be heard who aren't normally listened to," Gutierrez says.—*Christy Risser*



'Thai-ing' it together. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Pong (right), a leader in the Thai Mennonite church, teaches a Life Enrichment class to a Thai villager. Eastern Mennonite Missions worker André Provost says that 27 people were baptized last year, and that this course was instrumental in bringing them to faith. Provost also reports that one month after a mission team's visit to the village of Non Paeng, he returned to baptize four believers in the river and began a weekly meeting.

Periodicals integration committee makes proposals

Kansas City, Mo. (GCMC-MC)—The periodicals integration committee of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) recently proposed the formation of U.S. and Canadian publications for the integrated church.

In a May 10-11 meeting, the committee made the following recommendations to the Mennonite Publishing House, the GC Division of General Services, the General Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and Mennonite Publishing Board:

- merge *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite* into a publication for the integrated Mennonite church, with primary responsibility for the United States.
- develop the Canadian newspaper *Mennonite Reporter* into a publication for the integrated church with primary responsibility for Canada.
- create a governance board for each publication that reflects its primary constituency.
- plan for cooperation between the publications and their boards to promote a unified denominational identity. This includes common graphic identity, at least 25 percent common content, the possibility of occasional joint issues, and editorial assumptions that reflect the vision and mission of the integrated church.

- **CPTers arrested, released.** Four members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Hebron team were arrested May 28 as they prepared to transplant olive trees that were illegally planted by Israeli settlers on Palestinian land. The team members were released June 1 on the condition that their mobility be severely limited. CPT is an initiative among Mennonite and Brethren congregations and Friends meetings.

- **Peace Tax Fund seeks hearing.** Oregon senator Mark Hatfield is asking other senators to support a Senate committee hearing on the U.S. Peace Tax Fund bill this year. Hatfield, sponsor of the bill that would allow conscientious objectors to redirect portions of their military taxes for other purposes, reintroduced the issue on March 29. Marian Franz, executive director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, says that even if efforts to obtain the hearing this year fail, "it puts us in a better position for next year."—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

- **VSer dies from cancer.** Kenneth "Smithy" Smith, Voluntary Service worker with Mennonite Board of Missions in Washington, D.C., died from complications due to cancer on May 1. The 48-year-old Washington native worked as a counselor at the nonprofit organization For Love of Children. A funeral was held May 8.

- **Art exhibit examines symbol.** One artist's vision for a symbol for the integrated Mennonite denomination is on display at Goshen (Ind.) College. Ann Graber Miller, assistant professor of art, designed a logo that includes symbols of a dove, flame, and fish as a possible logo for the merged entity of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. The exhibit, "In Search of a Mennonite Symbol," opened May 25 and continues through Aug. 15 in the college art gallery, located in the Harold and Wilma Good library.

- **Anabaptist course begins.** Spurgeon's College in London has begun a master's program in Baptist and Anabaptist studies that is available through a distance learning format. The program explores the origins of Anabaptism and the formation of Baptist life, Anabaptist and Baptist theology, and church and society in the Anabaptist and Baptist traditions. More information is available from Ian Randall, Spurgeon's College, 189 South Norwood Hill, London SE25 6DJ, United Kingdom.

- **Zehr interviewed by NBC.** Howard Zehr, director of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. office on crime and justice, was interviewed for a documentary to be released to NBC affiliates May 30. "Restoring Justice," produced by the Presbyterian Church (USA), visits communities that are experimenting with restorative alternatives to problems of crime and punishment. Zehr, generally credited with having developed and popularized the idea of restorative justice, was interviewed about his work in this area.

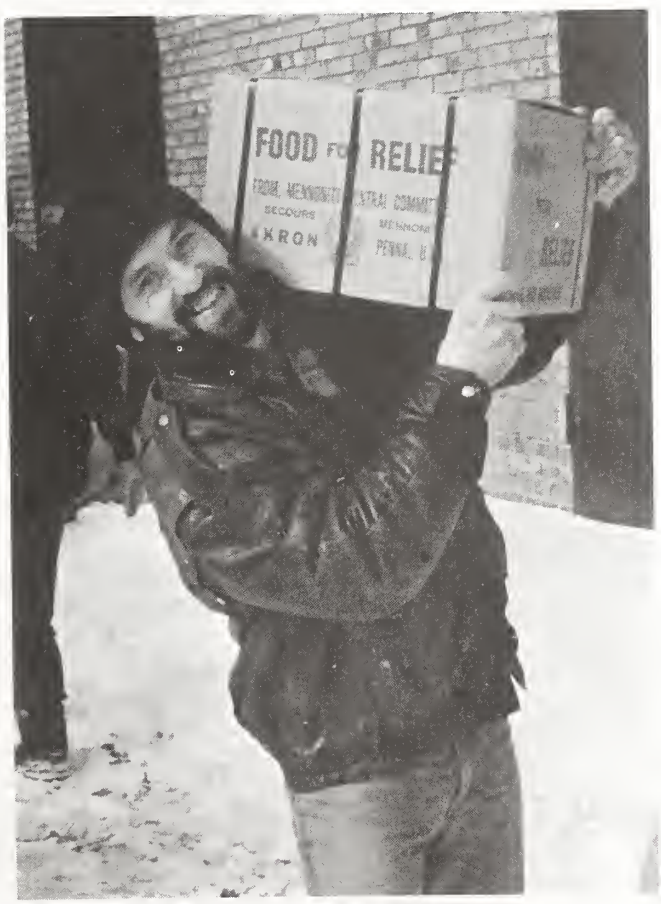
- **MEDA in Mozambique.** Mozambique, often called the world's poorest country, is the latest field of activity for Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). A microenterprise pilot project in the capital city of Maputo begins in July. The plan involves creating a self-sustaining financial institution that provides access to savings, credit, and training services for micro-entrepreneurs. Plans are to assist 240 clients in the first year, says Allan Sauder, director of operations for Africa and Asia for MEDA.

- **Book translated 14 times.** A forthcoming Dutch edition brings to fourteen the number of languages in which *Seven Things Children Need* by John M. Drescher appears. Published by Herald Press, the book also appears in English, Afrikaans, Arabic, Chinese, Finnish, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Thai.

- **Corrections.** A Mennoscope item in the April 30 issue of *Gospel Herald* incorrectly reported the name of the Meserete Kristos Church Bible Institute in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The item also should have said that students study in English for five

'Spasibo bolshoye, MCC.' *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—That's the "thank-you" message students at the Donetsk (Ukraine) Christian University enthusiastically sent to the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) constituency for a recent shipment of canned meat, milk, and supplies, says MCC worker Mary Raber. Pictured here is student Yuri Mikhailov carrying a box of MCC canned beef to a storage shed at university.

"Times are hard now and this year the university just barely made expenses," Raber wrote in a May 10 letter. "The gift from MCC was a magnificent boost for our weary winter morale; when it arrived we were pretty much down to buckwheat or potatoes and cabbage every day."



Since 1991, Donetsk Christian University has been preparing students from all over the former Soviet Union for Christian service in both established and new churches. The university comprises a community of some 100-150 people, including students, staff, faculty, administrators, and their families. The shipment, valued at $53,900 and sent from MCC's warehouse in Ephrata, Pa., also contained milk powder, clothing, medicines, and soap—items the students cannot afford to purchase. Central Pennsylvania dairy farmers contributed the 3,000 pounds of milk powder. This material aid shipment was one of five MCC has sent from the United States and Canada to the former Soviet Union in the last three years; their value totaled $329,000. Two additional large shipments are being planned for this year.

three-month periods. An coming events announcement in the same issue should have said that John Hurston, not Yonggi Cho, will be a resource person at the School for Apostles on July 15-19.

• **New appointments:**

Claudia Fahnestock, administrative assistant to the president, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.

Lisa Good, administrative assistant for Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Dave Harnish, program director of Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions. Harnish begins in January 1997.

Timm Wenger, communications coordinator for Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Carol Bollinger, news writer in the communications department, Eastern Mennonite Missions.

• **Pastor transitions:**

Iris Hartshorn was installed as copastor with her husband Leo at Houston (Tex.) Mennonite Church on May 19.

Conrado Hinojosa will resign from a pastorate at Church of the Lamb, Brownsville, Tex., on Jan. 1, 1997.

Robert L. Miller was licensed as pastor of Ocean City (Md.) Mennonite Church on Sept. 17, 1995, by Atlantic Coast Conference overseer David Stoltzfus.

David and Debra Whitermore ended their service at New Hope Mennonite Church, Olathe, Kan., at the end of March.

• **Coming events:**

50th anniversary celebration, Salem Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa., June 16. Begins at 9:30 am.

Families with disabilities retreat, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., July 7-11. Resource people include Sheila Stopher Yoder, Marion Bontrager, and Nick Nigro. More information from 800 839-1021.

Festival 96, Lancaster Mennonite High School, July 12-14. Sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions, the festival features Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth With A Mission, and Don Jacobs, director of Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation. Includes a Festival of Culture with music, drama, stories, food, and crafts from around the world. More information from 717 898-2251.

Basic institute in conflict management and mediation, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College, July 22-26. Faculty for the sessions are Dalton Reimer and Ron Claasen. More information from 800 909-8677; e-mail: pacs@fresno.edu

Fall conference, Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa, Ill., Nov. 9. Sponsored by the Illinois Mennonite Conference and the western portion of the Central District of the General Conference Mennonite Church. James Waltner is the featured speaker. Workshops include "Singing the Psalms" with Mary Oyer and "Trust in Congregational Life" with Merlin Thomas.

• **New books:**

Growing Together, by Anne Neufeld Rupp, focuses on how parents can understand and nurture children's faith journeys. Includes discussion questions at the end of each chapter. Available from Faith and Life Press, 800 743-2484.

• **Job openings:**

Administrative assistant, executive office of the Mennonite Church General Board. Begins Aug. 1. Qualifications include demonstrated skills in management, coordination, knowledge about the Mennonite Church, and experience. Contact Miriam Book, MCGB interim general secretary, at 219 294-7131.

Director and teacher in Hispanic ministries program, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include recruiting, teaching, and supervising students in program for training Hispanic church leaders. Qualifications include advanced theological and biblical training and ability to teach in Spanish and English. Ph.D. preferred. More information from John D. Nyce, interim academic dean, at 219 535-7503; e-mail: johndn@goshen.edu

Voluntary service position, International Guest House, Washington, D.C. One-year position for single person opens the beginning of August. Contact the International Guest House at 202 726-5808.

Youth minister, Allegheny Mennonite Conference. Half-time position. Contact Larry Miller, chair of the search committee, at 800 451-5719.

MARRIAGES

Fritz-Kauffman: Janet Fritz, Shipshewana, Ind. (Clinton Frame), and Loren Kauffman, Shipshewana, Ind. (Marion), May 18, by Robert L. Shreiner.

Jensen-Mareno: Katina Jensen and Ben Moreno, Elkhart, Ind. (Sunnyside), April 27, by Vernon Schertz (grandfather of the groom).

Leaman-Skirsky: Duane Leaman, Narvon, Pa. (Conestoga), and Jessica Skirsky, Narvon, Pa. (Conestoga), May 4, by Harvey Stoltzfus.

NEW MEMBERS

Benton, Goshen, Ind.: Jeff Cross, Margie Miller, Levi Schrock, and Phyllis Bontrager.

Capital Christian Fellowship, Laurel, Md.: Brigitte Young and Deli Greaves.

Cedar Falls, Iowa: Richard Berky.

Charlottesville, Va.: Rob Nalle, Julia Nalle, Jerry Shinsky, and Elaine Shinsky.

Chestnut Hill, Columbia, Pa.: Ryan Brubaker, Joseph Kreider, Laura Newcomer, and Rachelle Newcomer.

First, Indianapolis, Ind.: Rick Bixler, Marsha Hooley Miller, Philip Moyer, Susan Moyer, Randy Miller, Kenda Resler, and Steve Hershberger.

First, Vineland, Ont.: Kristina Block and Emily Nigh.

Harrisonburg, Va.: Sinouane Keopanya, Nang Keopanya, and Robert Keopanya.

Kaufman, Hollsopple, Pa.: Anthony Werts, Keli Snyder, Mitchell Cable, Megan Cable, Molly Cable, Kent Lehman, Lawrence Duffy, and Reuben Hunsberger.

Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.: Mitsuko Kanamoto.

University, State College, Pa.: Robert Stauffer and Evelyn Stauffer.

Zion, Archbold, Ohio: Vivian Gooding and Bonnie Short.

Zion Hill, Harrisonburg, Va.: Alvin and Tonna Brubaker, Marian Crawford, Agnes Grogg, and Sterril and Vivian Simmons.

BIRTHS

Bradford, Renee Collins and Spencer, Burlington, N.C., John Myth Spencer (first child), April 1.

Cassel, Rhonda Sue Alderfer and David Ray, Harleysville, Pa., Derek James (third child), May 16.

Charles, Carla Meyer and Seth, Indianapolis, Ind., Lena Marie (second child), May 3.

Hostetler, Lavonn Duncan and Eric, Goshen, Ind., Corey Meade (first child), May 11.

Jones, Amy Gustovich and Matt, Shipshewana, Ind., Madison Christine (second child), March 5.

Miller, Irma Diener and Glen, Middlebury, Ind., Lucas Jay (second child), Dec. 31, 1995.

Orellana, Karem Sandoval and Elias, Kitchener, Ont., Kevin Elias (first child), May 21.

Rudy, Judy Penner and Brian, Toronto, Ont., Alexander (first child), May 21.

Sauder, Christen, Indianapolis, Ind., Meghan Joy (first child), May 11.

Schrock-Hurst, Carmen Schrock and Luke Hurst, Elkhart, Ind., Caleb Eli (third child), May 14.

Waidelich, Shawn Campbell and Lee, Wauseon, Ohio, Brooke Austyn (first child), May 19.

Weirich, Tracey and Kyle, Knox, Ind., Carol Mae (first child), April 8.

White, Julia White and Jack Butt, Harrisonburg, Va., Evan Olivia (second child), May 23.

Yoder, Juanita Christner and Rob, Shipshewana, Ind., Brooke Kalyn (first child), April 4.

DEATHS

Benner, G. Faye Alderfer, 34, Harleysville, Pa. Born: July 15, 1961, Sellersville, Pa., to Russell L. and Gladys C. Alderfer. Died: May 14, 1996, New York, N.Y., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Neil M. Benner; sons: Chad E., Derek N.; brothers and sisters: R. Brent, Douglas K., Russell Eric, and Audrey J. Alderfer, Christine Carpenter, Gayle Angell. Funeral and burial: May 18, Plains Mennonite Church, by Michael A. Meneses and Gerald C. Studer.

Custer, Steven Douglas, 41. Born: June 22, 1954, Seymour, Ind., to Richard D. and Katherine Robins Custer. Died: March 30, 1996, Clinton, Mo., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Patricia Roth Custer; children: Michelle K., Shawn D. Funeral: April 3, Washington Mennonite Church, by Tim Detweiler and Willard

Roth. Burial: Bethel Mennonite Cemetery.

Eshleman, Marvin C., 70, Paradise, Pa. Born: Jan. 13, 1925, to Clarence B. and Anna R. Eshleman. Died: July 11, 1995, of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Elizabeth S. Eshleman; children: Robert, Leon, Betty Marie, Nelson; brother and sisters: D. Rohrer, Dorothy, Lois. Funeral and burial: July 15, 1995, Paradise Mennonite Church, by Mark M. Lehman, Clair B. Eby, Robert G. Zook, Vernon D. Smoker, and Clarence R. Neff.

Hochstetler, Mary A. Krabill, 92, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Sept. 22, 1903, Muscatine, Iowa, to Michael and Katie Wyse Krabill. Died: May 14, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—children: Arlene Miller, Dale, Donald, Roger, Mary Brenneman, Orlin; 19 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Earl Hochstetler (husband). Funeral and burial: May 17, Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, by George Hansen and Wayne Bohn.

Keffer, John W., 69, Chesapeake, Va. Born: Newport News, Va., to Leroy and Alice Buckwalter Keffer. Died: May 8, 1996, Chesapeake, Va. Survivors—wife: Dana Hochstetler Keffer; children: Alan, Dale, Gary, Dorothea Besso, Marilyn Baker, Deanna Curling, Juanita Harris, Eric, Allene Webb, Lynn; brothers and sisters: Leroy, Jr., Marvin, Freddie, Anna Mae Hertzler, Betta Lee Lowry; 26 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 11, Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, by Dale Keffer, Harold Buckwalter, and Harold Bergey.

Lile, Zella, 82, Perryton, Tex. Born: Feb. 6, 1913, Beaver County, Okla., to L. V. and Minnie Mae Gregory Gross. Died: March 17, 1996, Perryton, Tex. Survivors—son: Jerry; sisters: Lorena Johnson, Lavona Harris, Irene Anderson, Opal Morrison; 5 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: E.C. Lile (husband), Ronald (son), and Beatrice (daughter). Funeral: March 19, Perryton Mennonite Church, by Darwin Hartman. Burial: Gray Cemetery.

Ness, Reuben, 88, Hanover, Pa. Born: July 21, 1907, Spring Grove, Pa., to William and Elizabeth Bair Ness. Died: April 21, 1996, Hanover, Pa., of a stroke. Survivors—wife: Ruth Kuhns Ness; children: W. Leroy, Mabel Baral, Daniel K., Reuben J., Adam K., Charles A., Marlin W.; 17 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 25, Bair's Mennonite Meetinghouse, by Richard Herr, James Danner, and John Forry. Burial: York Road Cemetery.

Rogers, Durwood E., 62, Spartansburg, Pa. Born: June 22, 1933, Spartansburg, Pa., to Elliot and Gladys King Rogers. Died: May 21, 1996, Spartansburg, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Helen Nichols Rogers; son: Jeffery Nichols; brother and sister: Reggie, Carol Staskiewicz; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: May 24, Valley View Mennonite Church, by Carl L. Smeltzer. Burial: Rose Hill Cemetery.

Roth, Chris, 92, Nampa, Idaho. Born: March 6, 1904, Nevada, Mo., to Samuel and Mary Schrock Roth. Died: May 16, 1996, Nampa, Idaho. Survivors—wife: Adelia Hostetler Roth; daughters: Darlene, Susan Emry; sisters: Elaine Cooper, Elma Flisher; 2 grandchildren. Congregational membership: First Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 21, Nampa, Idaho, by Duane Oesch and Robert Garber. Burial: Kohlerlawn Cemetery.

Roth, Elvera Gingerich, 86, New Hamburg, Ont. Born: June 5, 1909, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Benjamin and Katie Steinman Gingerich. Died: May 16, 1996, New Hamburg, Ont. Survivors—children: Eileen Bender, Marianne Schlegel, Armand; brothers and sister: Eldon and Melvin Gingerich, Christina Steinmann; 10 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Moses S. Roth (husband). Funeral and burial: May 18, Steinmann Mennonite Church, by Ingrid Loepp Thiessen and Herb Schultz.

Schrock, Jacob A., 80, Fort Wayne, Ind. Born: Sept. 1, 1915, Phoenix, Ariz., to Ananias and Amanda Miller Schrock. Died: May 10, 1996, Fort Wayne, Ind. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Abraham, Tobias, Millie Miller, Nancy Schrock, Anna Lee Luker, Mary Miller. Congregational membership: First Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 15, MacComb & Sons Lakeside Park Funeral Home, by Paul D. Leichty. Burial: Greenlawn Memorial Park.

Schrock, Roscoe W., 70, Goshen, Ind. Born: Feb. 7, 1926, Goshen, Ind., to William and Mary Ethel Van Scoik Schrock. Died: April 13, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Esther Hoover Nader Schrock; children: Thomas, Roger, Michael, Christopher, Jay; stepchildren: Najwa Nader Wimmer, William Nader; brothers and sisters: Herman, Lloyd, Sylvia Martin, Emogene Reed, Mary Hill; 4 grandchildren, 5 stepgrandchildren. Predeceased by: Doris Hoogeweg Schrock (first wife). Funeral: April 16, College Mennonite Church, by James Waltner. Burial: Prairie Street Cemetery.

Short, Earl, 88, Stryker, Ohio. Born: June 26, 1907, Archbold, Ohio, to Aaron and Sarah Rupp Short. Died: May 18, 1996, Bryan, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—wife: Lucile Short; children: Roger, Philip, John; sisters: Ruth, Marie; 7 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 21, Pine Grove Mennonite Church, by Walter Stuckey and Terry Shue. Burial: Lockport Cemetery.

Troyer, Martha Fern Yoder, 90, Wellman, Iowa. Born: March 3, 1906, Johnson County, Iowa, to Mahlon E. and Anna Hershberger Yoder. Died: April 30, 1996, Wellman, Iowa. Survivors—children: Carroll, Lynn, Larion; sisters: Leona Miller, Edith Yoder; 11 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ezra Lloyd Troyer (husband) and Donn (son). Funeral and burial: May 3, Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, by George Hansen and Wayne Bohn.

Considering the pastorate. *Goshen, Ind. (GC)*—Ten Goshen College students will get a first-hand look at the pastorate this summer. The seven women and three men are participating in the ministry inquiry program—an internship designed to help them explore the pastorate as a vocational choice. The program provides students with intense three-month exposure to pastoral ministry in a congregational setting with a supervising pastor. Participants receive a stipend contributed from the congregation, conference, college, and Mennonite Church.

The ten students are:

Front row, left to right: Cheri Krause to Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.; Ryan Springer to Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen; Bethany Swope to Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church; David Johnson to Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Back row: Malinda Berry to Berea Mennonite Church, Atlanta, Ga.; Peter Wiens to West Philadelphia (Pa.) Mennonite Fellowship; Megan Ramer to Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.; Lisa R. Miller to Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen; Rachelle Schlabach to Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo.; Rebecca Workman to Salem Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Newspaper

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THE LAST WORD

Pruning is not punishment

"The one constant in life is change." Thus began the announcement of my resignation after more than eight years of pastoring at Taftsville (Vt.) Chapel Mennonite Fellowship. The announcement was one of the hardest things I've ever done. I even became teary practicing my speech in front of the spiders in my basement.

Why is this business of leaving so painful? I recognize that this time there is more uncertainty for me, since we are moving for my husband's job, and I have nothing specific on the horizon. But this has been very much a mutual decision, and I am excited about new possibilities. I'm not sure it would have been any less difficult if we were moving for me.

Two things happened this week which helped me put things in perspective. I heard Willem Lange, a local radio commentator, talking about job loss. He said that losing one's job and looking for a new one is much like being born. And most newborns don't seem to enjoy it all that much. Birth is a marvelous, freeing experience, but if a baby doesn't enter the world squealing, it gets strong encouragement to do so. Birth is generally quite traumatic for all concerned, in spite of all that is good and wonderful about it.

The second thing was a call from a friend from my congregation. She said she had read something, thought of me, and wanted to pass it on. It came from *Praying with the Anabaptists* by Marlene Kropf and Eddy Hall from a section entitled "Pruning for Greater Fruitfulness."

My friend read: "Just as the vine has its growing seasons, our lives and ministries have their seasons. One season of fruitfulness ends and another begins. . . .

"In the life of the vine, this letting go is called pruning. It seems a brutal reward for a branch that has yielded luscious grapes to cut off six, eight, even ten feet of its luxuriant growth, leaving only a stub of a few inches. What vinegrower would be so merciless? The answer is any vinegrower who wants to make the branch as fruitful as possible.

"As harsh as it may seem, pruning is not punishment; it is actually a tribute to the branch. Unfruitful branches don't get pruned; they're simply cut from the vine and burned. In choosing to prune a branch rather than discard it, the vinegrower is both recognizing its past fruitfulness and expressing faith in its future fruitfulness." *

Had I discovered those words myself, they would have been very meaningful. But having them read to me by one who shares the pain of my leaving was a special gift.

As I reflect on the significant crossroads in my life, times when I changed routes, I stand in awe of the ways God nudged me off one road onto another. Those changes became opportunities to hear God's call in new ways, to develop new areas of giftedness, and to experience more deeply God's grace and power.

I was also in my eighth year on the faculty at Eastern Mennonite High School. It was a Monday morning in October. I walked into the principal's office and announced that this would be my last year. He looked at me with that "what's-got-into-her?" look. Then he said, "You don't make decisions this way. Can we talk about it?"

We talked about it, and with his blessing I terminated at the end of the year. Not because my experience there had been bad, but because I was sensing the nudge. It was time to change routes. I had no idea what I would be doing when I made that decision. In retrospect, I see that as my first "pruning," one of a series that God has done to develop new areas of faithfulness and fruitfulness.

Recently another person from church said: "I'm so excited about the change that is happening for you and Ron. I think change is great! But I will hate to see you leave."

Thus the agony and the ecstasy of change. At some level, I know God has another place for me, other opportunities for fruitfulness. But saying goodbye to people you have loved and who have loved you is never easy. I'm glad it isn't.—*Martha Kolb-Wyckoff*

In addition to her pastoring, Martha Kolb-Wyckoff has served for four years as one of Gospel Herald's *editorial consultants. In August, she and her husband, Ron, will be moving to Goshen, Ind., where Ron will teach at Bethany Christian Middle School.*

**Excerpted from* Praying with the Anabaptists *by Marlene Kropf and Eddy Hall © 1994 Faith & Life Press, Newton, Kan. Used by permission.*

June 18, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

The Mennonite church takes its names from Menno Simons, shown here in an etching by Christoffel van Sichem, a Dutch artist of the early 17th century. "Mennonitism is not a religion nor our primary confession of faith. We belong to Jesus Christ the Lord."

Whose name do we claim?

Is denominationalism past in this time of redefining religious affiliations? Are those defending Reformation traditions just fighting around medieval castles?

by Mark R. Wenger

Church denominations are taking their knocks these days. And why shouldn't they? After all, if denomination proliferation were cancer, the body of Christ would have been dead long ago.

Writing in 1991, church historian Martin Marty cited these statistics: as of 1985 there were one Roman Catholic, 504 (non-Roman) Catholic, 580 Orthodox, and 21,104 Protestant denominations—and the number was growing at five per week! At the February 1996 Promise Keepers clergy conference in Atlanta, Ga.—attended by 43,000 pastors from many Christian groups—denominationalism and racism were cast as the two giants that effectively thwart the coherent and collective witness of Christians in contemporary North American culture.

Is the age for denominations past in this time of redefining religious affiliations and heeding the urgent call for Christian unity? Are the scholars who defend Reformation traditions fighting battles around medieval castles while larger events sweep forward into the

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Ron Klassen and John Koessler:
What's so special about the small church? 6

John L. Ruth:
How I keep from becoming cynical 8

Damascus Road teams affirm statement against racism 9

Peacebuilding institute draws participants from 30 countries 10

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The Mennonite church has a unique and distinctive mission. We need not give up our identity, tradition, and theology when we carry out that mission.

future? Or, on the other hand, are the "non-denominational" and "free" churches and ministries simplistically buying into an Americanized generic religiosity that has little theological substance or quality?

The Mennonite church is not immune from these questions about the place and future of historic denominations. For example, do we name a new congregation "Mennonite" or call it a "community church"—placing denominational affiliation as a footnote or hiding it as buried treasure? Do we insist on believers baptism or require new members to relinquish military service? Shall we heed calls for Christian unity when such don't include all the elements of the faith we hold dear?

Shortly after Kathy and I came to the Shenandoah Valley as pastors of Springdale Mennonite Church, I drafted some copy for a new congregational brochure. I spoke of Springdale being "affiliated with the Mennonite Church." A few persons who saw the rough draft objected to the language. They wanted something stronger like "part of the Mennonite Church," or "belonging to the Mennonite Church."

The Mennonite faith heritage really matters to some members here—it is to be embraced and taught with gratitude and perseverance. For others in the congregation, however, the name is incidental. These persons have found a congregation where they are loved, where they have met Jesus, and where the people worship and serve God together. The label is almost beside the point. Thus in one congregation, we represent various points on the denominational spectrum: from devotion to disinterest. And—with some trepidation at the potential risks, professional and relational—I confess to feeling in my soul at times that same ambivalence about denominational tags.

The apostle Paul was steeped in his Jewishness—which he claimed, utilized, and never denied throughout his ministry. He nonetheless found a way to transcend his heritage for the larger good and glory of God. Perhaps he provides something of a model for Mennonites today seeking to be themselves and at the same time participate with other Christian traditions in God's kingdom work.

The church of Corinth provides one case study. Sometime after he had spent a year-and-a-half among them, Paul got word that some old habits were emerging in the fledgling fellowship. He wrote them a letter, opening with a rhapsodic greeting and then tackling the most urgent matter (1 Cor. 1:10-17). In fact, Paul spent the first four chapters of his letter coming back to this headline issue again and again: people were voting for their favorite superheroes of the faith. They were choosing up sides, "going around saying, 'I'm on Paul's side' or 'I'm for Apollos' or 'Peter is my man' or 'I'm in the Messiah group' " *(The Message)*.

In short, the young Christians at Corinth had gone political. They had developed party affiliation and brand-name loyalty. The standard blue jeans and tennis shoes they had initially put on in Christ didn't quite cut it any more. Designer jeans and big-name athletic wear seemed the only way to get attention and define secure identity.

Paul had two main concerns: the church was becoming divided, with each faction trumpeting its distinctive agenda to the detriment of the whole. And someone or something was replacing Jesus Christ as the essential confession of faith. "Was Paul crucified for you? Was a single one of you baptized into the name of Paul? God didn't send me out to collect a following for myself, but to preach the message of what he has done, collecting a following for him" *(The Message)*.

Whose name do we claim? We often use the word "Mennonite" or "Anabaptist" as one of our key identifiers. More often than I like, however, I hear people refer to the "Mennonite religion." Mennonitism is not a religion, nor is it the primary confession of faith we make. We are not baptized into Mennonitism but into Christ the Lord!

Does Paul's warning imply something for denominational identity? By claiming the name "Mennonite," are we further dividing the body of Christ? By claiming the name "Mennonite," are we replacing the central confession of faith in Christ with a higher loyalty to a tradition or history? Yes, I fear Mennonites could do that at certain times and places.

I believe it is valid to infer that Paul raises telling questions about making denominational claims too exclusive and self-righteous. His words do remind us of the human tendency toward party spirit and bad-mouthing others who we think have missed the truth. Paul does offer a direct challenge to placing Mennonitism or any tradition's history at the center while relegating faith in Christ to the periphery or to the status of mere assumption. I am haunted by Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees who,

like many Mennonites, took their religious life seriously and still strained out the gnat only to swallow a camel.

If we can take Paul's remarks in 1 Corinthians 1 as a sober word of caution about denominationalism, then he also offers a decisive clue to a fresh and balanced paradigm in 1 Cor. 3:1-14. Paul is willing to see his labor with Apollos and with Peter as fundamentally one of cooperation rather than competition. In verse 9 he calls them colleagues and fellow workers in the field of God. "We each carried out our servant assignment" *(The Message)*.

There is plenty of work for Christians of all stripes. It is foolish—Paul would say infantile—to consider ourselves in rivalry with other Christian groups. We as Mennonites ought to view our work with other Christian groups as one of cooperation not competition. The field is certainly big enough. Bickering with each other hampers the work and breeds mistrust. Yet sometimes we spend more time distinguishing ourselves from other Christians than from those clearly opposed to the kingdom of Christ.

Paul, however, does not advocate a generic or uniform church. Paul acknowledges his distinctive task as planter of the seed of Christ even as he recognizes and blesses his fellow workers. He doesn't give up his identity, history, or personality in doing his God-given task of pointing people to Christ. Here is where denominations and faith traditions find their rightful place.

In the same way, we in the Mennonite church have a unique and distinctive role to play in Christian mission in the world. The Mennonite church doesn't give up its identity, tradition, and theology when it carries out that mission. Its duty and joy is to respond faithfully to Christ's call to be the church as discerned in the community of faith through the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. The church must own who we are in our distinctives with humility and without self-righteousness or inferiority. That's a tall order, but our times demand it.

We live as Mennonite Christians not, first of all, for our own denominational survival and growth. We live as Mennonite Christians for purposes of God's kingdom as a whole. After all, God is the one who actually brings the growth. And, in the process, we look for ways to work with other Christian workers. Where we disagree, let our winsomeness and holy lives be more persuasive than our logic.

It doesn't matter who plants, who waters, who cultivates, who prunes, who sprays, or who harvests. Let all of us be about our tasks as God has apportioned his grace. But it is God who makes things grow. The Christians who plant, water, cultivate, prune, and harvest all share one purpose. Each has a job to do within that purpose. But it is God in Christ who must be at the very center of the process.

Mark R. Wenger copastors Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va., with his wife, Kathy Weaver-Wenger. He is at the dissertation stage of doctoral work in preaching and worship at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. This article is adapted from a sermon he preached at Springdale to introduce a series on "Mennonite Faith Distinctives."

"Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. . . . You shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation."—Exod. 19:5a, 6a

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Thanks for addressing the matter of military members in the church (May 21). The issue is timely.

I wonder if we often limit our nonviolent witness to refusing military enlistment. That leaves the onus for the sins of violence on military personnel.

Our witness must include the invitation to military personnel to consider Jesus' way. That witness has integrity when the rest of the church is also asking how to be nonviolent Christian citizens. Mennonites paying taxes and remaining silent about an astronomical "defense" budget are also complicit in violence. Brother Leslie Francisco III expressed this well in ***Between the Rock of Peace and the Hard Place of Outreach.***

He also expressed a troubling perception, however, in saying that "we enjoy the privileges of a free society because of a strong military." Perhaps looking again at our history—as Carol Hunter and James Junke are doing (***Writing American History That Highlights Stories of Peacemakers***) will help us reconsider the premise that violence is essential for our society.

Eldon Epp
Manhattan, Kan.

The May 21 issue of *Gospel Herald* poses, again, the struggle of standing (crawling) for (toward) peace. ***Between the Rock of Peace and the Hard Place of Outreach*** follows an extended reflection on ***Making Sure Which Game We Are Playing.*** Both these articles consider the Virginia Mennonite Conference's struggle to reject the military oath and yet to remain "in full fellowship" with those congregations which disagree.

Once again we are face-to-face with our human dilemma—like the six blind guys who each encountered totally differing parts of the elephant and therefore knew what the elephant looked like. We have different realities and cultural-biblical perspectives. We fail to walk in another's shoes time and again.

Working for the military may be no different in reality than paying taxes to the U.S. government, supporting or opposing abortion, being homosexual or heterosexual. Our constant challenge is to recognize how far we fall short from our visions, goals, images, and faith commitments. This is much deeper then handball vs. racquetball, and I conclude with a section from a recent editorial in *Mennonite Weekly Review*: "Maybe, instead of calling ourselves a historic peace church, Mennonites should be known as a 'still-trying-to-be-a peace church.' And then live up to it."

Wes Hare
Richmond, Va.

I admire the skill, dedication, and insight it takes to publish *Gospel Herald* weekly, covering the range of pressing issues that you do. I'm sure you'd like to please everyone, but I suggest you should not feel compelled to print every letter.

One of these was the letter by Norman Teague ("Readers Say," May 28). It appears no one did a reality check:

1. Is the issue of whether Mennonites are or are not in favor of the Endangered Species Act relevant to our larger "Christian mission"? If not, then Teague's letter should not have been published, and neither should this one. If it is, then the issue deserves closer examination.

2. I lived in southern Oregon from 1980 to 1995 and taught surveying at the Oregon Institute of Technology. No, I have not set chokers around six-foot logs, but I have taught numerous displaced loggers who aspired to a different life, and I am proud to have shared in the learning experience of many who were successful.

Retraining works for some, but not for others. Does that mean loggers should be permitted to continue cutting down trees because that is their primary marketable job skill? The issue is more complex than that.

3. The entire state of Oregon has a population of about 3 million people. Probably something over 1 million of them are wage earners. And how many wage earners work in the lumber industry? A ballpark estimate might be 200,000, although I suspect it is somewhat less. Finally, how many of those are adversely impacted by efforts to preserve spotted owl habitat? I don't believe it is anywhere near the "millions" suggested by Teague.

4. Has Teague flown over the forests of Oregon lately and seen the checkerboard appearance of clear-cut logging? It is well known that vistas from major

highways have been carefully preserved when choosing areas to be logged, but the view from the air is dramatically different. Yes, clear-cutting has been shown to be the "best" logging method for many cases, but governmental claims of sustainable yield deserve careful scrutiny.

5. In some parts of Oregon, replanted trees grow rapidly. But there are many other larger areas which receive less than 15 inches of rainfall per year, and it takes a long time to grow a harvestable tree. Timber companies and governmental agencies justifiably brag about the number of trees planted, but the survival rate of the trees planted is rarely quoted. There is still room for improved reforestation practices and for many more trees.

6. Responsible stewardship of our planet is important, and the devastation of rain forests deserves attention, but I'm not really convinced the forestry practices of Central and South America are "bad" while ours in North America are "good." Here I believe Teague's paintbrush is much too broad.

7. Finally, I fail to see the truth in or the point of Teague's last statement, "The spotted owl will survive if we allow Oregonians to harvest their lumber and give them back their jobs in doing so." Valid arguments are supported by conditions which are both necessary and sufficient. I don't believe survival of the spotted owl depends upon more timber being harvested. Neither am I convinced that cutting more timber will insure survival of the spotted owl.

With apologies to Teague, I suggest *Gospel Herald* readers deserve better.

Earl F. Burkholder
Circleville, Ohio

Making Sure Which Game We Are Playing (May 21). How can we as Mennonites call ourselves a peace church if we endorse the killing of babies through abortion? This needs to be denounced as well as killing by the military.

You can't have it both ways. Either we will hate the thought of abortion in all its forms, or else we will have to say that abortion is not wrong. We must not only denounce the violence through wars but also that which is done against babies through abortion.

The article, ***Between the Rock of Peace and the Hard Place of Outreach***, in the same issue mentions gangs, alcoholism, and spouse abuse as violence. Why not abortion? This too should be renounced as followers who confess Jesus as God's Son.

Vera & Vida Schloneger
Orrville, Ohio

In recent reports about persons employed by military institutions becoming members of the Mennonite Church, the writers imply that these people are strongly and ardently engrossed in the military way of life. But is that true? Or are they ordinary people caught living in an area where employment is limited more or less to military institutions?

May these people be mostly victims of circumstances, persons who are now seeking salvation and fellowship of Christ in the Mennonite Church? Who are we to withstand their faith and salvation? Do all believers and people who are baptized have full knowledge and the ability to express total commitment to all that Jesus and the apostles taught?

At what point does a believer become fully knowledgeable and totally committed to all New Testament truth? Do we who have years of Christian experience and training measure up in total understanding and commitment? Are we without error or imperfection?

Is there no place for spiritual growth and development with new commitments from time to time? Should we not be glad for these people who are making first steps in accepting Jesus, becoming baptized, and having membership in Christ's church? Is it not our duty to accept and receive them so that we may teach them and help them to grow spiritually?

It is one matter for the church elders and conference officials to sit in high places and make rules and regulations. But it is another matter for pastors and church members to witness and disciple new believers.

While serving as a pastor, an elderly man who was an active Mason accepted Jesus and asked for baptism and church membership. I did not challenge him as a newborn babe because I felt he needed some spiritual growth and maturity to understand the truth about lodges. About six months later, I noticed he no longer wore his Masonic ring. When I asked him about it, he said, "I don't enjoy that fellowship any more." In the process of growth, the Holy Spirit did a better job than any of us could.

Is there no hope for militarists in our Mennonite churches? We need to walk with newborn believers and allow the Holy Spirit to work. May God give us grace and wisdom to be faithful while the Spirit does so.

J. J. Hostetler
Goshen, Ind.

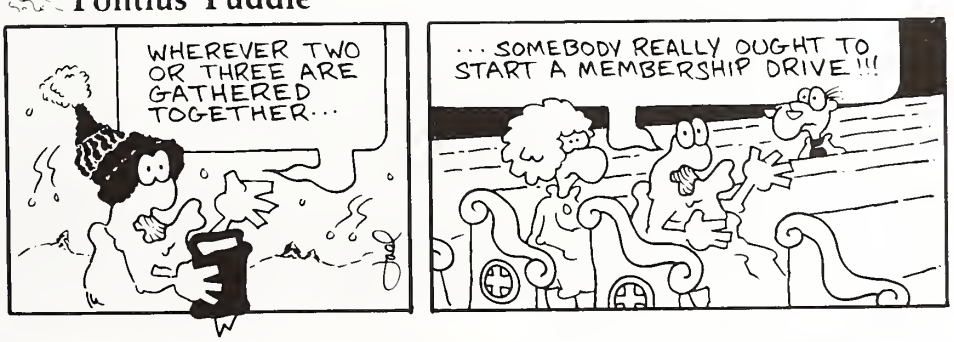
Making Sure Which Game We Are Playing (May 21). I agree that the rejection of violence is intrinsic to the gospel. Therefore people involved in the military should not be accepted as members of peace churches.

However, military violence is not the only kind of violence. If the rejection of violence is intrinsic to the gospel, then anyone who believes that it is ever permissible to kill unborn children through abortion should also be denied membership in a peace church.

Jerry C. Stanaway
Lombard, Ill.

Gospel Herald *welcomes letters in response to our news and features. Please keep them brief. We reserve the right to edit all letters for clarity and length. Send them to "Readers Say,"* Gospel Herald, *616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683.*

Pontius' Puddle



"Jim, you left your lights on"

What's so special about

By focusing on what it does best—provide intimacy and involvement—the small church can minister to those hungering for the personal in an impersonal age.

by Ron Klassen and John Koessler

Ever thought about why pictures of little country churches often grace Christmas cards? Why megachurch facilities seldom do? Or why it is such a high compliment for a visitor to a big suburban church to say, "This feels like a small church"? Yes, there is something special about the small-town church.

Why then do so many small-town churches feel inferior to larger churches in cities and suburbs? That's easy to answer; it's because big churches can do so much more. After all, what small church can put together a mass choir? How many small churches can hire a youth pastor, a children's director, a director of senior adult ministries, or a full-time minister of music?

Both of us, as pastors of small-town churches, have at times tried to imitate larger suburban churches. The result? Our churches didn't feel like big churches, and in the process of imitating someone else, we lost some of what makes the small-town church so special. We discovered that there are some things big churches can do best and some things small churches can do best. For any church to be all it can be, it has to make the most of its strengths.

Big tractor, little tractor. Most farmers have at least two tractors; one large and one small. The big tractor is better for some jobs, the little tractor for others. Trying to mow a ditch with a big tractor is an exercise in frustration, but a small tractor does the job handily. Plowing a large field with a small tractor would take forever, but a large tractor can make short work of it. The smart farmer uses each tractor for the jobs it does best.

Just as it is foolish to use a small tractor to do a big tractor's job, it is counterproductive to imitate large-church programs in small churches. The small church that tries to become a scaled-down version of a big church will become a pale imitation of a big church.

The small church is at its best when it makes the most of those qualities that make the small church special—intimacy and involvement.

Intimacy. While the large church scrambles to find ways to encourage warmth and personal relationships, the small church, if it is healthy, naturally has a family atmosphere. Large churches work to create small-group ministries; in the small church, many small-group dynamics occur spontaneously. In the large church, many faces are unfamiliar; in the small church, everyone knows everyone else. In a large church, an usher passes a note to the pastor who then announces, "A brown Ford, license TM3527, has its lights on."

The pastor of a small church looks out the window and says, "Jim, you left your lights on."

Anyone who has belonged to a healthy small church has many memories of warmth and intimacy. One of our favorites is of the holiday we (Ron and Roxy) awoke to find ourselves snowed in with no electricity or phones. Church friends had invited us to spend the day at their home, but with the road buried under knee-deep snow, we resigned ourselves to spending a lonely day at home.

We were feeling depressed and disappointed when, about noon, we heard a knock at our back door. There stood the 21-year-old son of our friends. He and his dad had spent the last four hours on two tractors, clearing the way from their ranch to the main road so they could get to our house. This warm friendliness is a big part of what large churches are hoping to recreate when they try to cultivate a small-church atmosphere.

Involvement. As an organization gets larger, the level of participation usually goes down. Eighty percent or more of the members of a small church often have designated ministry responsibilities, while most larger churches are fortunate if 30 to 40 percent of their members accept specific assignments.

Before Scott and Lyn began worshiping at the church that I (John) was pastoring, they attended a larger congregation of 300. Though they had grown up in that church, neither had been very involved in its ministries. When I asked why, they said they hadn't felt needed.

They both quickly got involved in our congregation. Lyn worked with several of our children's ministries and later volunteered to type the church bulletin. Scott became a leader in our midweek children's program and used his mechanical skills to keep the church's lawn mower in shape.

To some extent, intimacy and involvement happen spontaneously in the small church, but

the small church?

a church can also intentionally build on these qualities.

We have often heard pastors of small churches complain about what their churches cannot do in worship services because of their size. But the small church makes a mistake if it tries to copy a large-church worship style. Rather, the small church needs to shape its worship to capitalize on what the small church does best.

For example, the small church is often tempted to feel inferior to the large church in the area of music. We look at the megachurches' big choirs, keyboard artists, and great talent and think, "If only we had just a little bit of that in our church."

True worship, though, is not a performance. A friend of ours who has served as the minister of music in several large churches points out that some large churches fall into a trap of approaching their music with a performance mentality that hinders worship. Good worship is not a fancy sound system or talented soloists or professional instrumentalists. The best worship takes place simply when all the people participate in ascribing worth to God.

How can a small church encourage everyone to participate in worship?

• ***Special vocal music.*** The big church only lets people on the platform if they can sing well. The small church that follows that policy will seldom have special music. Plus, this flies in the face of maximizing involvement. In his book *Real Worship,* Warren Wiersbe describes the attitude called for in the small church:

"If the players and singers are doing their best and seeking to do better, then God accepts their 'sacrifices of praise' and so should we. . . . Whenever I am listening to a below-average presentation, I imagine my Lord receiving it and presenting it to the Father; and that changes my attitude completely."

• ***Special music by children.*** The small church should invite children to play instruments or sing even though their music is less than perfect. Everyone forgives children when they make mistakes. Plus, parents will think, "If our family was in a large church, they would not let my daughter play a piano solo."

• ***Special music by families.*** Both of us have heard family music presentations that, though full of imperfections, connected powerfully with the audience. To the small church's credit, the congregation is more interested in giving people opportunities to participate than it is in judging those who take part.

• ***Congregational singing.*** The small church cannot have a mass choir, but neither can the large church sing around the piano. The informality of the small church can make congregational singing something truly special. Small congregations can choose the most singable songs and sing several of them in a row. Slides or an overhead projector get people to look up to sing rather than burying their heads in hymnbooks.

• ***Leading worship.*** Small congregations can form worship teams to share in leading worship. They can also encourage broad participation in all parts of the worship service, such as Scripture reading, praying, and taking the offering. Young people especially should be encouraged to take part. This is excellent training for future ministry.

• ***Sharing time.*** Small churches can easily include testimonies and sharing times in their services. In our impersonal world, people feel a deep need to have a place to share their experiences, yet such sharing is almost impossible in a large-church worship service. In the small church, personal sharing in the service can lead to powerful ministry for persons who want to become involved.

The capacity for intimacy and involvement make the small church unique. In a world in which most people feel like faces in the crowd, many are longing for intimacy rather than polished performance, for involvement rather than spectator status, for small rather than big. By focusing on what it does best, the small church can minister to people who are hungering for a personal touch in an impersonal age.

This article is adapted with permission from No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church *by Ron Klassen and John Koessler (Baker 1996). After many years of pastoring small-town churches, Klassen is now general director of the Rural Home Missionary Association in Morton, Ill., and Koessler is assistant professor of pastoral studies at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.*

An open letter to John Miller:

How I keep from becoming cynical

by John L. Ruth

Dear John:

Thank you for your letter. It always helps to know when someone takes one's creative efforts seriously.

In your letter, you ask: "How does one keep from becoming cynical?" In other words, why do I continue to work in and write about the church in spite of its imperfections, its being an "earthy vessel," as you put it?

A lot depends on why I would write about our church in the first place. If I went at it with an itch to do an exposé, I could have a field day. As it is, I try to tell the truth about the church because I love it—it's my life. As I write, I'm amazed that in the midst of so much human failure, the voice of Christ has come through to me as powerfully as it has.

Also, I haven't given up on some of the issues that have been bungled by the church in the past. I write, in part, in the hope that by laying out the story, we can see the need for repentance and reconciliation.

Can I think of this earthy vessel as the bride of Christ? Yes. When I see how Jesus wanted Peter with him in his holiest moments—the same Peter who caved in, betrayed his friend, and blustered meaninglessly. When I see how Jesus said he had desired to eat the passover with friends who he knew would be spineless under pressure and have the gall to bicker over who was greatest in the midst of his passion. When I consider some of these biblical scenes, and consider also that the writers chose to include them in their story, I don't have too much trouble feeling compassionate toward my own church.

Cynicism comes when we project adolescent ideas of perfection on the church and then take satisfaction in its ironic imperfections.

You ask, "Were there ever any undefiled motives in church?" Technically, we all have some mixed motives, but I can bear personal witness that I've known people whose testimony that they loved the church and tried their best to serve it rang true in my life. Certainly I've also seen a lot of pretense and self-serving, but that's not news. There's lots of that everywhere else. What is news is that a vision of a new human fellowship, reconciled by Christ's cross and responsive to his Spirit, does appear in this world. It has a distinct and recognizable and unique flavor, and in the Mennonite version I've known I've had some heavenly fellowship.

Any answer to your question "What is truth?" depends on how you ask it. When Pilate asks it, it's in the voice of a politician and power broker, who implies the answer he can accept: truth is whatever a particular group wants it to be to have its version of life justified. You notice that Jesus doesn't dignify Pilate's political question with a spoken answer. Jesus is the answer whom Pilate cannot afford to accept, given his precommitments.

The truth is that God has spoken, that the one he sent has marked out a path with his own blood, and that he has asked us to walk in it as a family as well as individuals. That family is a church against which the profoundest destructive forces will not prevail. The bickering and chicanery and selfishness and false piety that creep into the church are not its true identity. The presence of Christ in its fellowship is.

Isaiah, Amos, Micah, and others saw nearly pure corruption among the people of God. They laid it out for all to see with impassioned rhetoric. We can't outdo their descriptions of hypocrisy, no matter how hard we try. They did it because they loved God and his people, and that's why we read their writings today alongside the poems of the psalmist. They all bothered to record the evil they saw not just to vent adolescent anger, but because the revelation of God's justice, faithfulness, and love was their ultimate vision.

That's the mind-set out of which I write. To write pious and nice accounts that leave out the darker dimensions—that's what would have been cynical or manipulative. To see God working in the midst of our failures, and to give credit to the humble exemplars of sacrificial faith, is my aim.

Thanks again for writing.

John

John L. Ruth is a writer, storyteller, dramatist, and preacher who lives in Harleysville, Pa. He wrote this letter in answer to a query from a reader of his book, Maintaining the Right Fellowship, *a history of Franconia Mennonite Conference.*

'New work is hopeful work'

Damascus Road teams affirm statement against racism

Newton, Kan.—Teams from nine Mennonite and Brethren in Christ institutions met March 23-26 in Leavenworth, Kan., and May 20-24 in Chicago to work on long-term strategies for dismantling racism in the workplace.

The March meeting focused on analysis and history of institutional racism, while the May meeting was a chance for teams to begin developing long-range strategies to deal with racism in their own organizations.

The 47 participants in the Damascus Road project drew up the following statement that calls the church and its institutions to "aggressively work at dismantling racism."

"The fact that we came up with a statement is significant," says Jody Miller Shearer, co-coordinator of the Damascus Road project. "In spite of the conflict that occurred, there was a sense among the teams that we were in process of doing something new—and that new work is hopeful work."

• • •

We agree with the 1989 Mennonite Church-General Conference Mennonite Church statement that "the foundation for our concerns is that we have become one in the blood of the crucified Christ (Eph. 2:14) and our membership is to be drawn from every race and tribe and language and nation (Rev. 5:9-10)."

We have begun to learn about the pervasive nature of racism in society at large and in our institutions. We understand that racism combines institutional power and personal prejudice. Racism is a diabolical evil. To dismantle racism, we must change the way our institutions have protected the privileges and power of white people.

We support the 1995 Hispanic Mennonite statement that calls for "transforming institutional structures, policies, and procedures to eliminate racism." Such transformation requires expanding basic understandings of mission and identity.

Failure to dismantle racism not only robs congregations and institutions of the rich spectrum of gifts and cultures but diminishes the church's witness in the world and ultimately renders it impotent. We have experienced the richness of worship, work, and building trust amid the ongoing struggle of coming to a common understanding of racism.

With renewed hope, we call the church and our institutions to build upon the church's many gifts and resources to aggressively work at dismantling racism: by making antiracism work a priority in our institutions' missions; by building on the work of each institution's antiracism team; and by participating in and supporting the ongoing work of the Damascus Road teams.

• • •

The nine participating teams in these session of the Damascus Road were from Eastern Mennonite University, General Conference Mennonite Church offices, Fairhaven Mennonite Church (Ft. Wayne, Ind.), Goshen College, Mennonite Board of Missions, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Mennonite Central Committee binational, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., and the Western District Conference.

The Damascus Road project grew out of a call by a multiethnic group of Anabaptists who met in Chicago in March 1995. Organizers hope to repeat the event for other institutions and congregations in the coming years. Interested congregations and organizations can contact Jody Miller Shearer at 717 859-3889.—*with a report from the General Conference Mennonite Church News Service*

MDS calls for support of church rebuilding project

This personal reflection is written by Jody Miller Shearer, racism awareness educator with Mennonite Central Committee U.S., who recently traveled to Alabama to the site of a church rebuilding project by MDS.—Editor's Note

Boligee, Ala. (MDS)—Just past Tuscaloosa, on my way to Boligee, the radio news reports another black church has burned down. That makes 30 in one year. Mt. Zoar and two other Baptist churches near this small, rural town fell to flames, one in December 1995 and two in January this year.

Rebuilding begins. Following initial inquiries by nearby Mennonites, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) agreed to coordinate the rebuilding effort at Mt. Zoar Baptist, the congregation with the least financial resources of those burned in the area.

I arrived on the worksite in the midst of a torrential downpour. MDS has set up a small village here. Seven trailers, including two mobile homes, will house the long-term team of nine and the 20-30 member youth groups who will assist the rebuilding project this summer. Although their presence probably more than triples the population in the immediate area, three decades ago that would not have been the case.

After voting rights were fully realized nearly three decades ago, white landowners forcibly removed the black sharecroppers. The only thing the sharecroppers did not have to move were the church buildings they owned. The sites, though now physically removed from the congregations, remain deeply significant to them in both a cultural and religious sense. Whoever chose to burn Mt. Zoar—whether in drunken spite or calculated hate—also knew the history. Those responsible apparently forgot, however, that the real church can't be destroyed by flames.

Upon entering the main MDS mobile home unit, I hear a meeting well underway. Arthur Coleman, Mt. Zoar's pastor, and MDS personnel discuss details of funding, construction, and coordination. Tim Smucker, MDS program coordinator, says that it was a deliberate decision that control of project finances and design remain securely in the hands of the local pastor and deacon. "There's no question that we're coming in here as a powerful white organization. Giving up some control we might otherwise keep helps even out the power imbalance a bit."

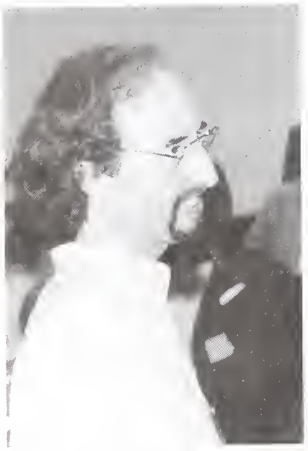
'Resurrection,' of sorts. Jane Kuepfer, who along with her husband J.D., will coordinate the youth activities here this summer, compares the project to a "resurrection" of sorts.

"It's the church rebuilding the church," she adds.

• • •

MDS welcomes donations to help pay the cost of rebuilding the Mt. Zoar Baptist church in Boligee, Ala. MDS has spent about $30,000 to get the project running, says MDS coordinator Lowell Detweiler, and is committed to raising the additional $50,000 it expects is needed for building materials and logistical support for volunteers. Checks made payable to MDS and marked "Alabama church rebuilding" can be sent to Mennonite Disaster Service, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17500-0500.

Peacebuilding institute draws participants from 30 countries



Ron Kraybill, director of the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at EMU, welcomes participants at the opening of the May 20-24 session.

Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)—The Anabaptist focus on peace has seen renewed emphasis in the numerous places lately. One of those is Eastern Mennonite University's conflict analysis and transformation graduate program.

The third annual "Frontiers in Peacebuilding" seminar on May 20-24 drew some 70 people from or working in 30 different areas—including Northern Ireland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, and Nicaragua.

Held at EMU as part of the Summer Peacebuilding Institute, the session was part of a sequence of 11 training workshops offered between May 1 and July 12 held in one- and two-week formats.

Keys to peace. Building peace has evolved from achieving an end to conflict to "changing and building something desired," according to John Paul Lederach, director of the program, in a keynote address. "Central to this task is the realization that community and relationship-building are the keys to peace and transformation."

Jean Paul Gakwaya, a World Vision worker in Rwanda who teamed up with three other leaders to represent Rwandan churches at the institute, said he does not know if those others are of Hutu or Tutsi ethnic background. "If I can say, 'He is a Tutsi,' or, 'He is a Hutu,' I have already created an obstacle to the creation of peace," he said. "This polarizing knowledge of ethnic ties that are linked to the horrors of the past only deters from the task of peacebuilding among the people who are working for a common goal."

Thirteen participants came from five of the most sensitive areas in Catholic-Protestant relations in Northern Ireland, to begin working collectively towards reconciliation. Lederach noted in a workshop that working for peace with such a group enhances the process, for it creates more "points of communication" and the possibility of networks.

Focus on process. These networks can create a frame of reference within which to work, noted Tonya Gallagher of Northern Ireland. "We needed . . . outside people to help us focus on the process and not the solution."

The Frontiers workshop, the centerpiece of this year's institute, featured four training tracks: fundamentals of international peacebuilding, collaborative approaches to urban conflict, trauma healing and reconciliation, and children in violence.

The institute's Christian framework was what drew some of the participants to EMU. Peacebuilding "includes pointing people to the need of being reconciled to God," said Raga Alphonsus of Sri Lanka. "Peacebuilding itself is a reconciliation with God."

"We who claim to be peacemakers . . . need to try and find more creative ways to find the links in building peace," Alphonsus added.—*Jessica F. King*

MCC worker helps investigate environmental disaster

Dale Hildebrand, MCC Philippines country representative, participated in a fact-finding team in May to investigate an environmental disaster site on Marinduque, an island 100 miles south of Manila.—Editor's Note

Manila, Philippines (MCC)—In March millions of tons of mine waste escaped into a major river system in the Philippines. As a result, the Boac River is now biologically "dead" and may take 25 years to rehabilitate. The mining company, partially owned by a Canadian corporation, failed to take precautions that could have prevented the disaster.

We discovered toxic mine tailings that clog the river are causing health problems, crop and livestock loss, and other hardships for local communities that depended on the river for fish, drinking water, and crop irrigation.

Crops destroyed. Marcopper, the mining company responsible for the disaster, is 40 percent owned by Placer Dome, a British Columbia-based company. On March 24 a sealed tunnel leading from the bottom of a huge waste pit to the Boac River burst and began spewing mine tailings into the river.

Local residents describe how they awoke the next day to find a wave of sludge advancing down the river bed. The waste flow, resembling a sand, mud, and water mixture, quickly destroyed roads, isolating residents and preventing them from transporting produce to market. Crops of corn, bananas, pineapple, and coffee along the riverbank were destroyed.

Farmers told us they expect to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars because the Boac River was their main irrigation source. Scores of residents became sick with respiratory ailments and diarrhea after drinking water from wells adjacent to the river.

Advocacy efforts. A recent team of United Nations experts has warned that with the river bed clogged by mine tailings, nearby villages risk flash floods when the rainy season begins in June.

In Canada, church groups led by the Task Force on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility have pressured Placer Dome to ensure its overseas operations do not cause ecological damage in the Philippines. Embarrassed by the controversy in the late 1980s, Placer Dome officials assured advocates future Marcopper operations would be safe.

Through a small annual grant to the task force and by supplying on-the-ground information, MCC is contributing to advocacy efforts in Canada that would require companies such as Placer Dome operating in the Philippines to be more responsive to local residents' concerns.—*Dale Hildebrand*

Villagers cross the Boac River on a makeshift bridge. MCC worker Dale Hildebrand says the river is biologically "dead" due to a mining disaster.

Don Steider of Goshen, Ind., demonstrates his portable sawmill. Steider traveled to Mongolia in May with Mennonite Board of Missions to train and implement the use of a similar mill in that country.

Mennonite helps Mongolians implement sawmill

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—When Goshen (Ind.) resident Don Steider bought a portable sawmill to build a log house for his family, he had no idea that the investment could really take him places.

Steider just arrived home after a monthlong trip to train and implement the use of a sawmill, very similar to his own, in Mongolia.

The trip is part of a two-year project studying whether using portable band saws is a viable option for jump-starting the factories that build housing and furniture for 90 percent of Mongolia's population. It is a joint effort between Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) and Joint Cooperative Services (JCS), a coalition of 12 "broadly evangelical" international mission agencies.

The benefits. Using a band sawmill as opposed to a circular sawmill will help to save work and trees in Mongolia, says Steider, maintenance supervisor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. A circular saw has a thicker blade that creates more sawdust and wastes more wood. The band saw is more accurate, safer for the operator to use, and produces 50 percent more useful timber than a circular saw, Steider says.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union five years ago, factories that once produced regular and predictable housing supplies and furniture greatly reduced production or closed their doors entirely. A lack of raw materials like wood has been one of the primary reasons for the closures.

The impact extends to housing and the *ger,* the traditional Mongolian house. About 90 percent of the population uses the *ger,* a haystack-shaped dwelling 21-24 feet in diameter and 6 feet high.

Health threatened. The Mongolian population is growing fast. The lack of suitable housing creates overcrowding and brings on the accompanying diseases like tuberculosis and pneumonia that threaten the health of many Mongolians.

The city of Uliastai has a barely functioning factory once owned by the Soviet Union that now functions as a cooperative run by local workers. JCS and MBM have joined with these workers to try to change the housing situation in the country.

The sawmill, shipped by boat to Mongolia in February, can saw 2,500-3,000 board-feet of wood per day. The sawmill is also portable enough to go anywhere that is accessible to a small trailer.

"It feels good to me to know that Christians can work together for this kind of project," says Steider. "I'm not a preacher or anything, so I feel this is a place where I have some know-how," he adds. "It's my way of giving to the church."—*Christy Risser*

Disciplinary process with Yoder concludes

Goshen, Ind.—The executive committee and Church Life Commission (CLC) of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference is concluding the disciplinary process with John Howard Yoder. Yoder's ministerial credentials were suspended in 1992 after allegations were confirmed that he abused appropriate sexual boundaries with a number of women.

The commission and Yoder mutually agreed that his ministerial credentials not be reinstated. While recommending the continuing use of an accountability plan, the commission and Indiana-Michigan Conference are encouraging Yoder and the church to "use his gifts of writing and teaching."

Accountability and support. In the fall of 1992 an accountability and support group was appointed by the CLC. This group met more than 30 times with Yoder and his spouse, Annie.

The meetings were "marked by openness, mutual acceptance, respect, confrontation and, we believe, growing trust," according to reports from the accountability and support group. They further note that Yoder has stated clearly that he is committed to not crossing appropriate sexual boundaries in his future relationships with women.

The accountability and support group's final report stated that Yoder made sufficient changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to bring closure to the process. They also report that Yoder "has gained greater awareness of and appreciation for the complexity and importance of forgiveness in the faith community."

The ger *is a traditional Mongolian dwelling. Shortage of lumber has created a housing crisis and overcrowding. MBM, in cooperation with Joint Cooperative Services, is sending a sawmill to Mongolia to work at solving this problem.*

European Mennonites consider past and future

Elspeet, Netherlands (Meetinghouse)—Over 800 European Mennonites met for inspiration and mutual encouragement on May 16-19 at Mennorode, a Dutch Mennonite retreat center here. Dutch Mennonites hosted the Mennonitische Europaische Regionalkonferenz (MERK) as part of the 500th anniversary of Menno Simons' birth. The theme was "500 years after Menno Simons: On the way to God's future."

A busload of Aussiedler, recent emigrants from the Soviet Union, came from Bielefeld, Germany, for one day. It was the first time these Mennonites have participated in the conference. An additional 1,100 Dutch Mennonites came for Sunday services.

Church and world. An underlying question at the conference concerned the church's relationship to the world. The European Mennonite Peace Committee encouraged participants to "go public" with their peace witness in a Friday evening service. People told about the struggle in Switzerland to do alternative service instead of military service, peace work in the former Yugoslavia, and courses in Brussels on conflict mediation.

The Sunday afternoon program included a cabaret by the ministers of the Haarlem and Amsterdam churches. They presented the Mennonite past in sketch and song, using as the main character a sick and aged Simons who reflected on his life. "Camerata Trajectina" also performed Mennonite and Dutch music of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Prayer as discipline. A strong current in several presentations was the need to deepen spiritual lives by the discipline of prayer. Other themes of the weekend were choosing, service and suffering, and comfort and hope. These were worked out in speeches, skits by children and youth, music, and discussion groups.

An exhibition of quilts included several antique quilts sent by Mennonite Central Committee to refugees who were housed in the Netherlands after the war. Several other quilts offered meditations on Menno Simons and the Mennonites. Marthje de Vries of Eindhoven, organizer of the exhibition, explained, "Mennonites sometimes trim their sails according to the wind, but whatever form they settle into, it is always beautiful."—*Lydia Penner*

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- **CPT begins work in two new areas.** Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) will send workers to Chechnya and Bosnia this summer to engage in peacemaking projects. This month two workers begin a four-month project in Jajce, Bosnia, in an attempt to create a peaceful climate for Serb and Muslim refugees returning to this town of 40,000. Bluffton (Ohio) College professor Jim Satterwhite will work with Friends to encourage Russian and Chechen peace groups and to bring international attention to abuses by Russian forces.

- **Young adults commissioned.** Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) commissioned 65 young adults into service with Discipleship Ministries on May 26 at Lancaster Mennonite High School. EMM commissioned six Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams to serve in Brazil, Canada, Kenya, Mexico City, Mexico (Sinaloa), and Sweden. Five Summer Training Action Teams were commissioned for France, Honduras, Kenya, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Four people were commissioned to serve as YES support staff at the Harrisburg Discipleship Center, and four were commissioned to become part of the first discipleship training center of the French Mennonite Church to be held in Switzerland.

- **Paraguayans form MEDA branch.** Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) began its first work in Paraguay in 1953—now, 26 local businesspeople have officially formed their own branch of MEDA. The group aims to provide spiritual, moral, and business support, and to develop business-oriented economic development projects for low-income Paraguayans.

- **MCC works in Lebanon.** Mennonite Central Committee will spend up to $100,000 (U.S.) to help rebuild in southern Lebanon in the aftermath of 16 days in April of shelling by Israeli forces in retaliation for Hezbollah guerrilla attacks. MCC workers distributed seedlings to farmers, replaced damaged bee-hives, distributed fertilizer, and helped farmers repair damaged greenhouses. MCC also provided funding for a center for disabled people that was damaged during that time and plans to work with needy Lebanese not eligible for government compensation.

- **Goshen board meets.** The Goshen (Ind.) College board of directors approved a budget of $18.3 million for the next fiscal year, a 4.6 percent increase from last year. Four new appointments were made: Kimberly K. Eiler, assistant professor of physical education and women's basketball coach; Tim L. Yoder, assistant professor of business; Irene Gross, assistant professor of French; and Michael Ruhling, assistant professor of music. The board also ratified a reorganization plan for the Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center.

- **AMBS examines focus.** The board of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., reviewed the needs and opportunities for nontraditional theological education during its spring meeting May 24-25. Interim president Gerald Gerbrandt said, "A recurring question is whether the mandate for AMBS is limited to graduate-level education or whether it includes leadership preparation at any academic level. That issue needs further discussion." The board also appointed John Hershberger adjunct professor in pastoral counseling.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Wayne North retired from the pastorate at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church on May 31.

Louise Wideman was ordained at the Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan., on April 28.

- **Coming events:**

Fifth annual peace conference, First Friends Church, Knoxville, Tenn., June 29. Sponsored by Mennonites, Friends, and Brethren. Topics include the biblical basis for peacemaking, the death penalty, and conflict resolution in schools and communities. More information available from Mary Lou Matteson at 423 691-5347.

Reception to honor Daniel M. Glick, Locust Grove Mennonite School, Smoketown, Pa., June 30. Inaugurates an endowed scholarship and celebrates Glick's 96th birthday. More information from 717 394-7107.

MennoCycles, Massanetta Springs, Va., July 12-14. Jim Delp is the resource person for this retreat for motorcyclists. More information from Laurelville Mennonite Church Center at 800 839-1021.

Music camps for children, Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa., June 24-28; Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, July 22-26. Sponsored by Harmonies, a nonprofit Mennonite-related ministry. Open to children ages 8-14. Patricia Myers and Glenn Lehman are codirectors. More information from 299-0436 or 656-6226.

- **New books:**

Gifts Handed Down by J. Daniel Hess is a journey into Hess' heritage prompted by his father's illness and death. Contains reflective essays about the qualities of gaity, purity, civility, dignity, simplicity, generosity, perceptivity, responsibility, serenity, and integrity. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

We Sat Where They Sat by Marie E. Cutman tells in story form and with over 130 photographs the experiences of Ada and Ida Stoltzfus during 37 years in Hebron, West Bank. The Stoltzfus twins went to Jordan in 1952 with Mennonite Central Committee and started and managed numerous feeding and milk centers and an orphan-

Dinner is served. *Lancaster, Pa. (LMH)*—Twelve Lancaster Mennonite High School (LMH) students spent their four-day minicourse in Washington, D.C., exploring the arts, issues of cultural diversity, and some of the city's problems. Pictured here are students Nneka Unonu, Edisa Curto, a soup kitchen volunteer; and Elvita Quinones helping to prepare a meal at S.O.M.E. (So Others Might Eat), a soup kitchen for homeless people.

LMH students left the traditional classroom setting May 28-31 to participate in a variety of minicourses. The 820 students chose from 40 courses—anything from repairing houses for Habitat for Humanity to hiking in the Adirondacks. Other minicourses included a trip to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, an educational tour of the Chesapeake Bay, home repair work in South Carolina, and a project with physically and mentally handicapped children in Mantua, Ohio.

Held every two years, the minicourses are designed to include a mix of service opportunities and recreation, according to science teacher Duane Evans who coordinated the effort.

age. Available from MecPublishing at 610 286-9926.

• **Job openings:**

Leader(s), Service Adventure program, Albany, Ore. Responsibilities include living in a household of 5-6 young adults, providing spiritual nurture, guidance in life skills, counsel, and administration. Two-year term begins in August. Service Adventure is a 10-month service program for young adults ages 18-20, sponsored by Mennonite Board of Missions. More information is available from Kent Dutchersmith at 219 294-7523.

Manager, Selfhelp Crafts, Baltimore, Md. The store is scheduled to open in August. Full-time responsibilities include recruitment, training, and supervision of a staff of volunteers, oversight of sales, advertising promotions and displays, and financial management including computer inventory control. Retail experience desired. Submit résumé with cover letter to J. D. Lantz, Selfhelp Crafts, Inc., c/o North Baltimore Mennonite Church, 4615 Roland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21210-2542.

Program coordinator, Friendship Community, Lancaster, Pa. Friendship Community is a human service agency that serves adults with developmental disabilities in a residential setting. Requirements include two years experience in the mental retardation field and a college degree; bachelor of social work preferred. Contact Denise Herr at 717 656-2466.

Programmer-analyst, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, Ind. Responsibilities include analyzing, designing, and/or purchasing business software for AS/400 and PC-LAN environment. Qualifications include bachelor's degree (or degree nearing completion) in a field like management information systems, business, finance, accounting, or math, and skills in communications, planning, organizing, and leadership. Two to five years of related experience preferred. Send résumé to Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Department, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.

NEW MEMBERS

Beaverdam, Corry, Pa.: Joel M. Miller.

Belmont, Elkhart, Ind.: Cindy Patterson, Angela Rock, Dottie Smucker, Marcus Smucker, Nick Patterson, Dwight Rock, Evan Hoover, Rosemary Poe, Lorie Vincent, and Mark Vincent.

Clarence Center, Akron, N.Y.: Robin Folger, Robert Folger, Lowell Freeman, Larry Rodgers, and Lynn Rodgers.

Community, Harrisonburg, Va.: Kim Brenneman, Bob Brenneman, Claire de Brun, Kristen Graber, Meribeth Kraybill, Ron Kraybill, Joyce Peachey Lind, John Ruppe, Kris Shank Zehr, Dickson Sommers, David Stenson, Esther Stenson, Carolyn Strong, Don Yoder, and Em Yoder.

Community Mennonite Fellowship, Milton, Pa.: Raymond and Mary Clark and Herbert and Colleen Dagen.

First, Colorado Springs, Colo.: Karen Ernst and Jackie Herzog.

Kern Road, South Bend, Ind.: Van Nussbaum.

Ocean City, Md.: Melesa Varsalona, Karen Nicholson, and Ed Miller.

Souderton, Pa.: Rory Bergey, Leah Clemmer, Kathy Colliver, Donna Floyd, Randy Floyd, Rick Gerczak, Jim Greiser, Melissa Greiser, Allen Hayden, Linda Hayden, Natalie Kulp, Pat Strenk, Donna Weaver, Duane Weaver, Matt Weaver, Kelly Wimmer, and Dixie Yoder.

BIRTHS

Esbenshade, Mary Fox and Ted, Mount Joy, Pa., Alanna Nicole (fourth child), May 29.

Harris, Kelly Geiser and Chris, Tiffin, Ohio, Xavier Christian (second child), April 16.

Keiser, Lori Hartman and Steve, Columbus, Ohio, (twins) Sarah Hartman and Lydia Hartman (first and second children), April 30.

Malcolm, Becky Shantz and Gary, Waterloo, Ont., Daniel Joseph (second child), May 21.

McClure, Kris Geiser and Miles, Saginaw, Mich., (triplets) Abbey Claire, Elizabeth Anne, and Carey Maureen (first, second, and third children), May 5.

Schlabaugh, Beth Yoder and Jim, Wellman, Iowa, Austin James (first child), May 30.

Wissler, Jennifer and Dale, Brownstown, Pa., Brandon Hunter (third child), May 29.

Yoder, Mary Brenneman and Lowell, Kalona, Iowa, Elizabeth Mary (third child), May 26.

Yoder, Carolyn Goodrich and Victor, Belleville, Pa., Ryan Victor (third child), May 14.

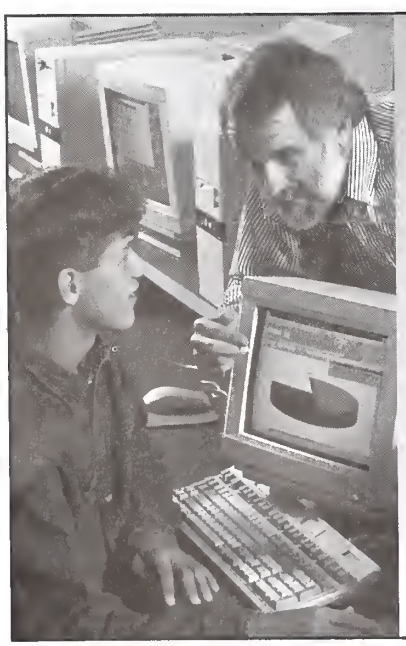
MARRIAGES

Boettger-Glanville: Jason Boettger, Tofield, Alta. (Salem), and Kim Glanville, Sherwood Park, Alta. (Pentecostal), May 18, by Orvin Boettger.

Durbin-Maust: John Durbin, Lexington, Ky. (Catholic), and Nicole Maust, Millersburg, Ind. (Clinton Frame), May 25, by Robert L. Shreiner and Terry Diener.

Kaufman-Strite: Michelle Kaufman, Goshen, Ind. (Belmont), and Kevin Strite, Harrisonburg, Va. (Dawsonville), May 25, by Duane Beck, Phil Mininger, Wil Blake, and Wilmer Hunsecker (grandfather).

Miller-Neuhard: Dale Miller, Watsontown, Pa. (Community Mennonite Fellowship), and Jan Neuhard, Watsontown,



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—Rick Yoder, *economics professor*

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Pa. (Community Mennonite Fellowship), June 1, by David Martino.

Schumacher-Thomas: Mike Schumacher, Hebron, Ill. (Lutheran), and Renee Thomas, Sterling, Ill. (Science Ridge), May 25, by Leroy Kennel.

DEATHS

Becker, Arletta Selzer, 71, Hesston, Kan. Born: Nov. 9, 1924, Canton, Kan., to Harry and Edna Selzer. Died: March 9, 1996, Newton, Kan., of a stroke. Survivors—husband: Edwin Becker; stepchildren: Elizabeth Hershberger, Martha Yoder, Daniel Becker; sisters: Kathryn Shank, Roberta Bitikofer, Ruby Ressler, Doris Bitikofer, Gladys Yoder; 9 stepgrandchildren. Memorial service: Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, by Frank Willems. Burial: March 13, Spring Valley Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Bender, Arthur, 78, New Hamburg, Ont. Born: June 20, 1917, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Moses J. and Katie Roth Bender. Died: May 8, 1996, Kitchener, Ont. Survivors—wife: Dorothy Zehr Bender; children: Gloria, Bruce, Gary, Randy; brothers and sister: Alvin, Nelson, Katie Zehr; 6 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 12, Hillcrest Mennonite Church, by Mary Schiedel and Maurice Martin. Burial: 19th Line East Zorra Mennonite Cemetery.

Diener, Jesse S., 72, Canton, Kan. Born: Sept. 23, 1923, Canton, Kan., to Arthur and Katie Diener. Died: May 15, 1996, Moundridge, Kan. Survivors—wife: Vera Diener; daughters: Phyllis Stutzman, Shirley Granger; brother and sister: Christian, Wilma; 8 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 18, Spring Valley Mennonite Church, by Frank Willems and Chester Slagel.

Groff, Jacob R., 63, Holtwood, Pa. Born: April 9, 1933. Died: May 4, 1996, Holtwood, Pa., by electrocution. Survivors—wife: Ruth H. Miller Groff; children: Donald J., Gerald D., Jean Hurst, Ann High, J. Lynn Redcay; brothers and sisters: Aaron R., John C., Elias R., Elsie Shirk, Mary R. Hershey, Martha Weaver; 12 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 8, New Providence Mennonite Church, by Robert Harnish and Kenneth Hershey.

Keller-Byrne, Jane Elizabeth, 44, Toledo, Ohio. Born: March 11, 1952, Lindsay, Calif., to Frank Jr. and Frances Byrne Keller. Died: May 21, 1996, Toledo, Ohio, in an automobile accident. Survivors—brothers: Frank and Peter Keller. Congregational membership: Bancroft Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 25, Toledo, Ohio, by Phil Ebersole.

Roth, Catherine "Katie" Albrecht, 87, Baden, Ont. Born: Nov. 30, 1908, East Zorra Twp., Ont., to Joseph S. and Lydia Erb Albrecht. Died: March 24, 1996, St. Mary's, Ont. Survivors—daughters: Jean Hammer, Bertha McCurdy; sister: Adeline Stere; 9 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Josiah Z. Roth (husband). Funeral: March 27, Hillcrest Mennonite Church, by Mary Schiedel and Maurice Martin. Burial: 16th Line East Zorra Cemetery.

Roth, Leonard Christian, 64, Baden, Ont. Born: Oct. 20, 1932, South Easthope Twp., Ont., to Solomon and Amelia Roth. Died: Feb. 15, 1996, St. Mary's, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Ruth Gerber Roth; children: Karen Tang, Barry, Sharon, Sarryl, Melanie Smith; brothers and sister: Lorne, Vernon, Florence. Predeceased by: Ronald (son). Funeral: Feb. 18, Hillcrest Mennonite Church, by Maurice Martin and Mary Schiedel. Burial: 16th Line East Zorra Cemetery.

Snider, Norman Ronald, 69, Kitchener, Ont. Born: March 5, 1927, Kitchener, Ont., to Kennard and Hilda Moyer Snider. Died: March 28, 1996, of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Irene Uttley Snider; children: Sherry Plourde, Kenneth; 3 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 1, Westmount Funeral Chapel, by David T. Martin. Burial: Hagey Cemetery.

Snyder, J. Wayne, 86, Kitchener, Ont. Born: June 19, 1909, Kitchener, Ont., to Jacob and Angeline Groff Snyder. Died: April 2, 1996, Cambridge, Ont., of heart failure. Survivors—children: Jean Gimbel, Carol Anne Hunt, Marion, Bruce, Marjorie; sisters: Beulah Moss, Cora Snyder, Eileen Snider; 12 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Olive Martin Snyder (wife). Funeral: April 5, Fairview Mennonite Home, by David T. Martin. Burial: First Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Levi U., 76, Gap, Pa. Born: Oct. 9, 1919, Salisbury Twp., Pa., to Henry U. and Elizabeth Stoltzfus. Died: May 18, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—wife: Naomi K. Smoker Stoltzfus; children: Esther M. Stoltzfus, Erma M. Kurtz, Kenneth L., Allen R., Wilmer J., Fannie E. Bowman; brother and sister: David S., Barbara Flaud; 15 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 21, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, by J. Richard Umble, Leroy Umble, and R. Clair Umble.

Stover, Vietta Alvina, 89, Kitchener, Ont. Born: Sept. 2, 1906, Kitchener, Ont., to Ananias Shantz and Ethleen Stover. Died: May 17, 1996, Kitchener, Ont. Survivors—children: Ethleen Martin, Stuart Gerber; 11 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Doreen Erb (daughter). Funeral: May 21, Edward R. Good Funeral Home, by Rudy Baergen. Burial: First Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Wilson, Gertrude Louise, 86, Kitchener, Ont. Born: March 30, 1909, Wingham, Ont., to Eugene and Martha McDonald. Died: March 18, 1996, Kitchener, Ont., of heart failure. Survivors—children: Donna, Louise, Grace, John Jr. Predeceased by: John "Jack" Wilson (husband). Funeral: March 21, Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, by David T. Martin. Burial: Listowel Fairview Cemetery.

Hist'ry mystery. *Marion, Pa.*—Roy Showalter, curator of the Mennonite Heritage Center near Marion, Pa., stands with pulpit, glassware, and lamps from old Mennonite churches. The collection includes back issues of more than 70 periodicals related to the Mennonite faith, church records, letters, and furnishings from old churches.

"For those of us who grew up with this, it's a reminder of how our ancestors lived," Showalter says of the historical artifacts. "Whatever we can get our hands on, we save."

While Showalter, a member of the Mennonite Historical Association of the Cumberland Valley for 30 years, knows a great deal about Mennonite history, there is at least one mystery he hasn't been able to solve. The center has a copy of a 1792 map of Baltimore showing a Mennonite meetinghouse near the city square. Showalter visited the site and discovered that it is now a vacant lot. He has been unable to find any written records of a Mennonite church at that location.—*Bonnie Hellum Brechbill*

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Why I am a Mennonite

I'm not sure when it was I first realized I was Mennonite. Perhaps it was when my parents took me, an eight-year-old, to the 1947 denominational meeting then known as Mennonite General Conference. I remember sitting on bleachers somewhere in Wooster, Ohio, surrounded by a crowd of people—people I somehow knew that I was connected with in some way.

I also learned early on that being part of these people was a decision I had to make, not something I was born into. Being raised in a Mennonite church counted for little with God. Just like those born into other homes, in and out of other religious traditions, I had the responsibility of making a decision about Jesus Christ and about the church—both of which I did some time later.

That's one thing that keeps me part of the Mennonite church today—this perspective on how one enters the kingdom. From the time I first attended Sunday school, I kept hearing that some day this ultimate decision was mine. No parent, no heritage, no church had or could make it for me.

Whether this emphasis is uniquely Mennonite I'm not sure. I do know that I read very little about the distinction between being born into a group and voluntarily choosing to affiliate with that group in the literature of other traditions. I believe it's an important perspective we have as Mennonites as we attempt to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

That's another reason I'm Mennonite—the emphasis we have on knowing and following Jesus. Discipleship is a foundation of our church—discipleship that comes not just from the head but involves how we live. From what I read in the Bible, this discipleship-made-practical is the only way of truly following Jesus.

We Mennonites take our most profound cues on discipleship from the Sermon on the Mount —some of us even think too much so. Yet I find that attempting to organize my life around Jesus' teachings in Matt. 5-7 not only personally satisfying as it receives confirmation through the nudging of the Spirit. But it also seems the only alternative in a world running amok with selfishness and violence.

Which is another reason I am a Mennonite. I want to belong to a peace church. In a world of strife and warfare, I've convinced that the way of love and nonviolence is the only one that brings about long-term results.

But being a peace church is not easy. We're finding these days how difficult it is to put into practice, yes, even in our own circles. We often fight about whether peace is *the* gospel, the *heart* of the gospel, or a *part* of the gospel. But there come those times when we get beyond arguments to practicing and to telling others about another way, the way of Jesus. Those occasions give me hope for the Mennonite church.

I am also Mennonite because these are the people who put up with me. How well I remember, as a restless boy at those Mennonite General Conference sessions in Wooster, the look of pain on the woman beside me when, in my fidgeting, I stepped on her toes. But then she managed a weak smile—and I knew I wouldn't get thrown out.

Today that woman is my symbol of my church. It has put up with my restlessness. It hasn't gotten rid of me when I stepped on some toes, deliberately or not. It not only tolerates me; it accepts, even appreciates me.

I must admit I have wondered occasionally about belonging to other groups. There's something about the liturgy of the Roman Catholic tradition that puts me in touch with the transcendent. I also like the spontaneity and the emphasis on the Holy Spirit of the Pentecostals. Some days the inclusiveness of the United Church appeals to me; other times it's the worldwide relief work of the Lutherans.

And yes, there are those days when I think it might be great to belong to a church in which denominationalism doesn't matter. Here one wouldn't be encumbered with the trappings of structure and organization—at least not beyond the local level.

But what keeps me coming back to the Mennonite church is what John Ruth has discovered there (see page 8). It is in the Mennonite version of the church that "I've had some heavenly fellowship."

In this fellowship I have come to know a God who continually challenges, sustains, comforts, and loves me. I can't and won't abandon the people who have helped me learn of this God. That's what keeps me Mennonite.—jlp

June 25, 1996

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

There is still a need for North American Mennonite partnership with Christians in other latitudes as they witness to their friends about the joy of life in Jesus Christ and minister to the needs around them.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Amanda April Yoder & June Alliman Yoder:
'How my God met me': One swing, one God, two sets of eyes 7

Barbara Esch Shisler:
Hebrews 12 8

Sainthood versus dirty hands?
Anabaptism and organizations 9

Chorus erases lines between prison inmates and Mennonites . . . 11

Missions in a global world:

'Your time is not yet over; your task is not complete'

Though Mennonites were among the last to get involved in world missions, we cannot afford to tire of the task of sharing the gospel just because we see others quit.

by Dennis Byler

God is raising up a generation who, for the first time in history, stand a real chance to transcend national, linguistic, and cultural barriers in order to become a truly worldwide fellowship of disciples.

When Christianity began, it spread rapidly through Palestine and western Asia to the north of Africa and most of Europe. With the rise of Islam after the seventh century, it almost disappeared from Asia and Africa. Then, beginning in the 16th century, the Roman Catholic variety of Christianity reached the Americas to the West and as far east as India, China, and Japan. A couple centuries later, Protestants caught the vision as well and began a new wave of geographical expansion for Christianity.

That wave is beginning to play itself out. Mennonites just barely got involved about a century ago as the wave of Protestant missions began to reach its climax and then to recede.

Those two waves of missions—the Catholic beginning in the 15th century, and the Protestant beginning in the 18th century—have one thing in common. Both were part of an expan-

Mennonites have something to contribute to missions: doctrinal flexibility coupled with an emphasis on the Christian life and obedience in the context of the church.

sion of European culture in general; they ran parallel to an expansion of European (later also North American) political and military influence around the world.

Today the world is becoming truly round and can no longer be conceived of as having a center. Europe is certainly not the center, but neither is North America. As long as the world was considered flat, it was possible to conceive of a center. Lines of communication and cultural influence were understood to radiate out from this center, and its influence was more or less intense depending on the distance.

But in today's round world, with its communications revolution, any place is just as connected as any other. Each point on the globe is its own center, and distance has become irrelevant. You have only to pick up your phone or turn on your computer and modem, and you are instantly anywhere you wish to be!

So the world is more and more becoming a community of mutual influence where everyone, in every nation and culture, can have a say. In terms of religion, Christian missionaries no longer come exclusively from Europe and North America. And soon—if not already—European and North American missionaries will be in the minority. Already waves of missionaries are spreading out from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, many of them coming to North America and Europe to help focus the power of the gospel on the violence, confusion, and general disarray of Western civilization.

But North American Christians—and most specifically North American Mennonites—are not done with the task set before us by Jesus Christ. Mennonites were among the last to get involved in world missions, and we cannot afford to tire of the task just because we see others quit. After all, most of these others were at it one or two centuries before we ever began.

It is tempting to forget about the rest of the world and concentrate upon the sickness of North American urban society, which is in such desperate need of healing. Mercifully, the church in the rest of the world also sees that need. The sickness and failure of North American urban society is, after all, exposed on the world's movie and television screens. More and more missionaries are coming to North America from around the world. I know of three groups in Spain alone which have already established missions in North America. So people who minister in North America are not alone in their calling to meet the needs of their own people.

By the same token, neither should Christians in the rest of the world be left alone in their calling to minister to the needs of their own people. There is still a need for North American Mennonite partnership with Christians in other latitudes, as they try day by day to be more faithful disciples, to witness to their friends and neighbors about the joy of life in Jesus Christ, and to minister to the pressing needs around them. Mission work in Spain is one example among many of this type of work.

Though Roman Catholicism still has an above-average hold upon Spanish society, Spain has basically embraced the general European trend toward a post-Christian society. The specifics of the history of Christianity in Spain are mostly discouraging. In general, Spanish Christianity has been oppressive and inquisitorial, manipulative, militaristic, superstitious, and superficial.

Meanwhile a biblical, evangelical Christianity has had several sowings—the last previous one in the 19th century and an important one happening right now. Biblical Christianity faces an uphill battle, though. While an apostate priesthood can no longer command the government to stamp out true Christianity, the new mainstream of secular sensuality, nihilism, materialism, and relativism may still prove just as efficient at smothering it.

Hundreds of missionaries have come into Spain in the last couple of decades. Perhaps as many as half of them come from Latin America, which shares the language, and where evangelical (often Pentecostal or charismatic) Protestantism has touched upon significant percentages of the population. With a few exceptions, these missionaries are church planters. Many of them take pride, as the apostle Paul did, in preaching the gospel where no one has gone before.

Among evangelical Christians in Spain, there is a strong tendency toward cooperation and perhaps an even stronger tendency away from denominationalism. A very large majority of this new wave of church planting is Pentecostal or charismatic in worship style and ministry orientation. Most Christians in Spain seem to assume the task before us is one of saving souls and ministering to personal spiritual and emotional needs, and any doctrinal differences beyond that are merely secondary trifles. An interesting number of both Spanish and expa-

triate church leaders have begun programs for rehabilitation of drug addicts, which is clearly the major thrust of social ministry for evangelicals in Spain. A second thrust seems to be the family.

I strongly believe Mennonites have something to contribute to Spanish Christianity out of our history and present understanding of the gospel. This specific Mennonite contribution arises from doctrinal flexibility coupled with an emphasis on Christian life and obedience in the context of a faithful church.

What do I mean by "doctrinal flexibility"? Mennonites do not tend to separate from other Christians over such issues as millennialism, eternal security, predestination, or the finer points of Christology. Our relative independence from the Protestant and evangelical theological mainstreams makes us able to dialogue with both sides of most issues (and with Roman Catholics) in a way others often perceive as bringing fresh insight.

And what do I mean by "Christian life and obedience in the context of a faithful church"? Though it often causes much stress among us as a church, our insistence that all church members should be able to agree on standards and conduct is seen by many Christians as a breath of fresh air. They often see their own traditions as less able to generate holiness and true transformation in daily life, particularly with regard to social issues. There is a uniquely Mennonite mix of "conservative" theology and "liberal" identification with the powerless that strikes many as creative and inspiring. Our stress on the church as a binding community of deep fellowship and mutual commitment is also a valid contribution, especially in the face of the individualism typical of Western society and of many churches.

Mennonites, of course, have no copyright or patent on any of these things, and many Christians in most other groups have similar attitudes and practices based quite simply on the Spirit and the Bible and not on denominational tradition. It is precisely for this reason that the Mennonite contribution can be valued by many. Kindred spirits in other groups take heart, and their faith is built up by

A new age has dawned in Christian history—the age of a worldwide partnership in which many gifts are distributed to different groups in different places.

awareness of our centuries-long experience.

Now-retired missionary John Driver, who served in Spain during the 1970s and early 1980s, made an admirable and historic contribution to Spanish evangelicalism. The seeds he sowed are clearly bearing fruit now in Spain in many groups of all backgrounds. Anabaptist-Mennonite books seem to have a certain attraction in some circles. Books published by a Latin American Anabaptist publishing concern have advertised in evangelical publications in Spain. The largest evangelical publisher in the Spanish language willingly publishes and promotes the books I write as part of my ministry to the Spanish-speaking world.

The planting of the Barcelona Mennonite Church about 15 years ago has been a move inspired by the Holy Spirit. Some evangelical leaders who felt somewhat threatened by John Driver's Mennonite ideas feel much differently now that there is a working congregation they can observe. I continually grow in appreciation of their pastor, José Luis Suárez, as an ambassador of Mennonite thought and practice.

José Gallardo, another Spanish Mennonite leader situated in Burgos, rates similar praise. He is a gifted teacher with a powerful ministry to drug addicts, alcoholics, and prisoners who has planted two small churches in Burgos in the past ten years. Gallardo and Suárez tend to move in slightly different circles, multiplying their impact.

Gallardo and Suárez both feel strongly that a North American Mennonite presence is still required in Spain—partly, I believe, for their own sense of security. They are acutely aware of their isolation in Spain as Mennonites. Having North American Mennonites serve there makes them feel connected.

But another reason they insist on a continued North American Mennonite partnership and presence in Spain is because they are men of vision. They see a vast challenge before them and feel overwhelmed by the odds. Mennonites can contribute so much to Spanish evangelical Christianity and to Spanish society in general. And Mennonites in Spain are only a handful, still only marginally known in this country.

In Acts 16:6, Paul paces up and down Phrygia and Galatia, "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia," trying to get into Bithynia and finally ending up in Troas. There, "during the night, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia pleading with him, and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' "

If we only had eyes to see visions, God would show us men and women from Spain pleading with us, "Do not forsake Spain." With the eyes of the Spirit, we would see men and women of many countries in Europe saying, "Do not forsake Europe." We would see men and women from all over the world, crying out to us, "We need you. Your time is not yet over. Your task is not yet completed. Come over. Come over!"

At the same time, Christian men and women of spiritual vision all over the world—from Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America—are perhaps seeing a man or a woman of North America, pleading with them as well. "Come over to North America and help us. The task here, too, is beyond our resources and beyond our faith."

And thus dawns this new age in Christian history—the age of a worldwide partnership in which the many gifts distributed in different groups and different places each contribute to the task at hand. The task is bringing the power and grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ to bear upon the problems, the despair, and the corruption in each nation. It will work similarly to the local congregation when it functions as Paul describes in 1 Cor. 12, or Romans 12; each one helping the other, all working together to witness and minister to this shrinking world which is becoming more and more a single community.

Dennis Byler has served overseas with Mennonite Board of Missions since 1972. He and his wife, Connie, and their four children have lived in Burgos, Spain, since 1981. Byler divides his times between teaching, writing, and visiting and encouraging the leadership of several independent churches in Spain as well as the Mennonite congregations in Barcelona and Burgos.

"O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous, you see the heart and the mind. . . . Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of the evildoers."—Jer. 20:12a, 13

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Making Sure Which Game We Are Playing (May 21). Exodus 20:13 says, "Thou shalt not kill." Matthew 19:19 says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Matthew 26:52 says, "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." In some of his writings, Menno Simons lists six features of a pure congregation—the sixth one is that suffering will occur to the members of the community. Mennonites went to prison rather than be noncombatants in the military in World War I. There would be no conscientious objector status in the draft system today except for people refusing all types of military service.

Denny Weaver is fundamentally wrong in claiming "Christians" who agree with military service differ from Christians who eschew military service like racquetball players differ from handball players: both athletes, just different sports. I propose that the correct analogy is false Christians versus authentic Christians. To claim that being a noncombatant is not being involved in killing is like claiming a bookkeeper for the mafia is not involved in crime.

I fundamentally disagree with Bishop Francisco of Calvary Community Church who claims our privileges and freedoms in this society come from a strong military. Nonsense! God is the source of our freedoms and privileges, coupled with the character of the typical American throughout the years. I served four years in the U.S. army, one of which was in Vietnam in 1968. I can state unequivocally from personal experience that violence has never once liberated anyone, or created any quality experiences in life. Violence, for whatever reason, degrades all participants, never uplifts.

Warren F. Metzler
Hackensack, N.J.

It occurred to me after reading J. Denny Weaver's sporty article ***Making Sure Which Game We Are Playing*** (May 21) that perhaps Mennonites are called neither to handball *nor* racquetball, but rather to a third way; namely, squash. Squash is encumbered neither by the handicap of handball, namely ambidexterity, or uncertainty about which hand to hit the ball with nor by the faintly yuppified air that clings to the racquetball court. While it is true that squash has in the past been identified with old money, exclusive men's clubs, and the Ivy League, now that Mennonites are pursuing professional paths as doctors, lawyers, surgeons, and tax accountants, I don't see why money should be an obstacle.

Ross L. Bender
Philadelphia, Pa.

Thank you for the editorial ***One Small Candle*** (Apr. 30). Other small candles are burning. I recently heard an account on a news program of a Christian in Oregon who is leading evangelical ministers on backpacking trips in the Oregon Cascades Mountains to help them experience some of the small amount of wilderness left in the United States. There, in close proximity to raw creation, they are able to experience some of the same awe as the psalmist who wrote of the stars which declared the glory of God and the firmament that shows God's handiwork.

On the basis of one summer spent in Oregon in 1947, Norman Teague in his letter (May 28) presumes to speak for the Oregon of 1996. He would likely no longer need to set "chokers around six-foot logs"; there are few to be found. And much of what preserves the rest is due to federal mandates. I have never set chokers as Norman did, but one of those six-foot logs snuffed out the life of my brother in 1951 while he was setting chokers.

Most of the jobs in the Oregon lumber industry are lost not because of attempts to preserve old growth forest but rather because the lumber industry can make more money shipping raw logs overseas than keeping them at home for domestic use.

Unfortunately, most people hear about the spotted owl in relationship to the Endangered Species Act. The main concern of many of us, including the Oregon Cascades backpacker, is not for one species but for a whole creation. Did not the Creator have more in mind for the Oregon wilderness than for the trees to be cut for human use? Was all that wilderness just created to wait for enterprising humans to harvest the trees? Those Oregon mountains are home to a vast, interdependent plant and animal life that has great diffi-

culty surviving in the cut and replant tree farms that are the domain of the private timber industry.

The Oregon forests have changed since 1947. The appetites of Americans for wood products have been met until only 10 percent of the old growth is left. Why not stop now? If we cut the remaining 10 percent, we will have no choice, and planting trees will not put back the raw wilderness designed over thousands of years by the Creator.

Larry Eby
Siletz, Ore.

Thank you for printing ***Life, It Seems, Is Mostly Grays*** (May 21). We worship a wonderful and complex God, one who does not always give clearcut answers to all of our church's problems. It is only as we make ourselves vulnerable, keeping in mind that each individual is created in the image of God, that we can begin to find common ground. To make judgments without considering this only polarizes and isolates those with differing viewpoints.

Steven Clemens Smucker
Telford, Pa.

In his letter in the June 4 issue of *Gospel Herald,* Ted Grimsrud writes, "When we come across cases where the biblical writers express values which contradict what we know of God's will through Jesus, we should be critical of those writers."

Jesus said, "You do err and know not the Scriptures" (Matt. 22:29) and, "The scriptures cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

It seems to me that Grimsrud is doing something that Jesus never did; that is, take on the writers of the Old Testament.

Harold B. Hershey
Souderton, Pa.

The news story ***Exploring Syria*** (June 4) failed to explain in what way this trip was tied in with an interest in Mennonite worship. If people lose touch with their own roots, it is only logical they end up fishing around for others. Maybe I should not be so surprised to learn that a group of "church leaders interested in Mennonite worship" ended up worshiping with the Syrian Orthodox, surrounded by graven images (shown by one of the photographs), and led by someone blasphemously referred to as "His Holiness."

But what really mystifies me is mention of a "service" at a mosque. These rootless Mennos obviously haven't the foggiest inkling of what evil spirits are "served" in Muslim services. They should have stood on a Syrian street corner and proclaimed clearly in Arabic that Jesus Christ is Lord and that every knee—including Muhammad's two knees—shall one day bend, and every head—including Muhammad's—shall one day bow at the name of Jesus. If they hadn't been immediately stoned to death, they could then have tried some early Anabaptist worship in the dark confines of a Syrian prison while awaiting deportation. Had this happened, I could finally begin to get the connection between this trip and Mennonite worship.

Dennis Byler
Burgos, Spain

In ***Making Sure Which Game We Are Playing*** (May 21), J. Denny Weaver attempts to define a peace church Christology in contrast to the emphases of the "denominations of western Christendom."

The difficulty is that when emphasizing particular peace church dimensions of Christology in contrast to other understandings, we might find ourselves exchanging one truncated Christology for another with equally tunnel-visioned view of Christ.

For example, the New Testament holds both the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and the reign of God together; both are primary. Attempts to submit to the reign of God that are not anchored in knowing God the Father as revealed in Jesus the incarnate Son become tiresome and legalistic.

The same is true whenever we fail to embrace the fullness of salvation offered in the "foolish" cross. Jesus crucified is both the atoning sacrifice for sin and the revelation of how faith shall be lived in our violent world.

Although Christendom might have neglected the loving-one's-enemies dimension of the cross, as peace churches we sell short our salvation when we neglect to confess with joy and confidence that we are forgiven because Jesus Christ has taken our place on the cross.

In this 500th anniversary year of Menno Simons' birth, we would do well to reflect on his appreciation for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Simons wrote, "The righteous died for the unrighteous, when we were yet sinners and enemies. . . . The innocent one bore the burden of the whole world . . . for the guilt of all. . . . the Scriptures speak of but one means against my sin, namely of the pure and red blood of my Lord Jesus Christ" (Marjan Blok, "Discipleship in Menno Simons' *Dat Fundament, Menno Simons, A Reappraisal,* Gerald Brunk, ed.).

Our calling is to proclaim Jesus in his fullness as the redeeming truth center of our congregations. Our understandings of scriptural teachings help focus the implications of believing in Jesus Christ; for example, some growth congregations use the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as their instruction for new believers. In missiology we refer to that kind of congregation as a "centered set church."

As I see it, when the center is clear, the boundaries become less important. Discernment about church membership is, then, especially concerned with the direction a person is facing.

David W. Shenk
Mountville, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle

How my God met me (10):

One swing, one God, two sets of eyes

by Amanda April Yoder and June Alliman Yoder

Amanda April Yoder (left) and her mother, June Alliman Yoder, standing by the tree that once held Mandy's swing.

Amanda: One summer day I was outside playing on the swing that hung from one of the trees in our yard. On this particular day I must have been extra rambunctious because I managed to get the swing caught in the branches of the tree. Upset because I knew that it was my responsibility to retrieve it, I tried to think of a way to get my swing down. When one particular idea occurred to me, I knew it was the route to take.

I knew God was always with me and around me and there to help me, so it seemed completely logical to simply ask God to get the swing down. That's what I did. I knelt down in the tall grass right under my suspended swing to pray. I prayed the prayer of a little kid who knew her helpful, loving God existed—and the prayer of a kid who wanted to resume play as soon as possible. I asked God to get my swing down, said thanks, and looked skyward to see the results of my work.

As you may have guessed, my swing did not come plummeting out of the tree. But the possibility of it not coming down had never entered my mind. I fully expected God to answer my prayer then and there, so I was furious. I stood up, gave one final glance up at my swing and at my failed God, and stormed into the house. My mother was sitting at the table, and almost immediately after I whirled through the kitchen, into my room and slammed the door, she knocked on my bedroom door. I assume from what I know of her now that she hoped to console me. After I had told her my predicament, she said something about how even though God hadn't gotten the swing down right when I wanted it nor in the manner that I wanted it, God had given me a mom and a dad to help me with problems like this. She said God had also given me other caring people to guide me through other difficult events in life.

Well, maybe she didn't get into the subject even that much at that point. Maybe she just said that this was why God gave me a mom and dad, and then we went straight outside to get the ladder to get my swing down. So in a way, that day I saw God in my mom.

June: I was the mom in the kitchen on that warm summer day, enjoying a little peace and quiet since Mandy was outside playing. Then suddenly, like a whirlwind, she rushed through the kitchen without a word, went straight to her room, and slammed the door. I was stunned and curious. Wondering what Mandy was upset about, I went to her door and knocked.

"Mandy, may I come in?"

"Yes," she replied through her tears. As I entered her room, the sobbing little girl exploded with a combination of anger and disappointment, "God doesn't answer prayer anymore!"

After comforting her the best I could, she explained to me that she had been playing on her swing and it got caught in the tree. She asked God to get it down, and God didn't do it. "So there, Mom, God doesn't answer prayer anymore," she said.

I was tempted to smile at this innocent little believer. I imagined her kneeling in the grass to talk to God just like she did at bedtime. It

One God, one swing, two sets of eyes

seemed like a teachable moment, so I told her that God had many ways to answer her prayer and that I was sure God would like to have that prayer answered. God didn't need to zap that swing out of the tree because Mandy had parents, she had a good brain, and we had a ladder. God could answer the prayer that way. She began to brighten. "Come on, Mom. Let's go out to the shed and get the ladder." So the two of us, as if on a holy mission to help God, went to get the ladder. We set it up under the tree, and as I steadied the ladder, Mandy climbed up to reach for the swing. It came down easily, and she was giggling with delight. Then the two of us took the ladder back to the shed.

Thinking that this little crisis was over, I gave her a loving pat and headed back to the house. But Mandy had a different idea. "Mom," she scolded in disbelief, "aren't we going to thank God?"

So we got down on our knees in the grass and thanked God for getting the swing down. Only then did she run off to play again, and I thoughtfully headed back to the kitchen. That day God was revealed to me through a young child who was indeed a little believer.

This spring Amanda April Yoder finished her first year at Goshen (Ind.) College. June Alliman Yoder teaches preaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. They are both members of College Mennonite Church in Goshen.

Hebrews 12

Since, therefore,
spirit-observers float around to encourage us,
let us let go of the heaviness that holds us down;
Instead of eking life out, trying to be perfect so as to
escape criticism, let us look to Jesus, our faith-mentor.
He never fails but keeps before us the way
to real life, even through suffering.
Can we enjoy discipline,
seeing that it is connected with punishment and pain,
seeing that discipline is not only a "celebration"
from a best seller's list but a hard rebuke from a parent?
Trembling hands and buckling knees
seem inevitable because of the confusion of the times,
feeling out of joint is a human condition,
peace and holiness and grace
are always mixed up with someone's pathology.
Gnarled roots trip us at every step,
the word coming from our mouths may be an affront
that requires endless repair.
But godliness is precious, spiritual life dear, when it is at home
in body and earth, the stuff of being human.
Treasure faith, don't trade for anything
the pearl worth everything. It is too lovely to neglect,
a fragrance, an energy, a fresh breeze, a warm glow;
don't try to grab it and fit it in a box.
The Holy scared people, even Moses,
who knew that it could strike dead, a power exciting but dangerous.
Now Jesus opens the gate to the heavenly city
and a gracious God and merry angels.
Best to watch out, though,
because refusing the gift provokes the giver
and the shaking starts,
not to scare us witless, but to shake loose
what cannot hold together so that the real good has form.
This calls for thanks that there is a rock to stand on
that is for always, and a Holy one
whose passion, though fiery,
only makes love true.

—Barbara Esch Shisler

Barbara Esch Shisler is a mother, chaplain, and writer who lives in Telford, Pa.

Scholars and staff of church-related organizations contemplate Anabaptist ideals and market realities

Elizabethtown, Pa. (Meetinghouse)—"The real world of institutions is not hospitable to saints. . . . The real world is a world where one inevitably gets dirty hands."

Ted Koontz's reflection on how dirty those hands have become—and maybe how to keep them a little cleaner—was echoed by several other speakers during the "Church-Related Institutions" conference June 13-15 at the Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups at Elizabethtown College. About 90 people—scholars, administrators, and observers—gathered to discuss issues relevant to church-related organizations, with special focus on Mennonite and Church of the Brethren organizations.

'Institutions do not make our decisions; people do.'

—Lee Snyder

Koontz, professor of ethics and peace studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., made several proposals for incorporating Anabaptist understandings of the gospel into church-related organizations so that they become "more saintly, more wholly and deeply Christian, more transparent windows to God." He suggested alternative ways to determine salaries that lessen gaps between the highest- and lowest-paid employees of an organization and also proposed the idea of organizations giving one percent of their budgets to sister organizations in the two-thirds world.

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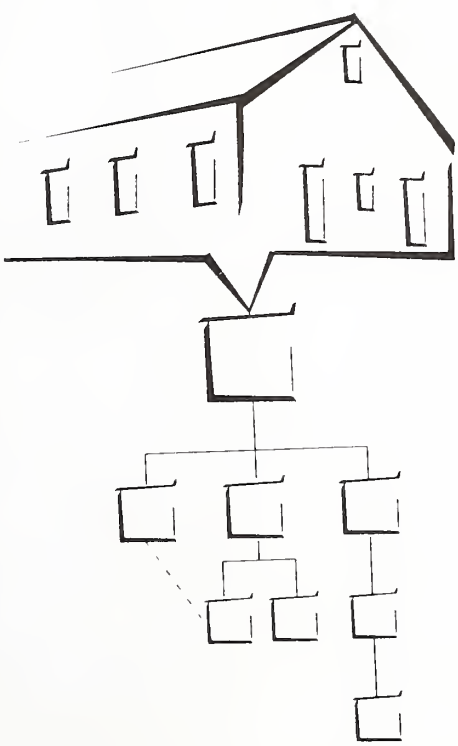
Several speakers emphasized that an organization of the church is an arm of the church and not the church itself because relationships are organized through contracts rather than covenants. "Confusion about congregations as institutions clouds our organizational culture," said Alice Roth of Mennonite Board of Missions on Friday.

In a banquet address titled "Leadership, Authority, and Power" on Friday night, Rodney Sawatsky, president of Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., said that the Brethren in Christ and Mennonite Brethren tend to think more positively of leadership than Mennonites because of their more ready embrace of evangelicalism. Sawatsky said that Scripture strongly affirms leadership, authority, and power, and that the frequent misuse of authority should not cause us to abandon the idea altogether. "[Successful] leadership is not primarily power over but empowering under" he said, adding that the challenge for leaders is to recognize the power they have and to use it wisely.

Not everyone at the conference agreed on whether it is possible "to take the radical nature of the gospel and place it into institutions," as J. Nelson Kraybill said. "Or is that an oxymoron?" he asked, considering the way that both Jesus and John the Baptist worked so clearly outside of institutions.

J. Lawrence Burkholder, former president of Goshen (Ind.) College, said that institutions necessarily involve hierarchy, property, wealth, exercise of authority, bureaucracy, and power. Leading organizations in today's climate may mean "living somewhere between the ideal and what is . . . absolutely wrong."



Several other tensions in institutional work were named in various sessions, such as the tension between being prophetic and responding to market pressures and between participatory decision-making and efficiency.

Scholars from fields like history, sociology, and theology and administrators and staff of church-related organizations presented papers in simultaneous sessions. Sessions were organized around themes such as health care institutions, the church-relatedness of Brethren colleges, mutual aid structures, and professional pressures.

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In a final panel discussion, John Lapp, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee, and Nancy Heisey, graduate student at Temple University, noted several "nitty-gritty" issues that in their opinions warranted more attention at the conference. Among them were institutional racism, economic issues, downsizing, competitiveness, and duplication. Heisey said that the future of church-related organizations will look different because ethnic "minorities" are minorities no longer in many parts of the church. And becoming more responsive to those away from the centers of power will require constant examining "whether we are really seeing things properly," said Lapp.

In the closing address, Lee Snyder, future president of Bluffton (Ohio) College, outlined a vision for institutions as servants. The "lofty heights and comic mystery" of institutions will always influence the work of staffs and boards of church-related organizations. Retaining the hope that institutions can be virtuous involves recognizing that "institutions do not make our decisions; people do."

The conference began the process of "broad-based rethinking," as Sawatsky said, and of filling "a great gap in our ethical thought," as Koontz put it, about an Anabaptist theology of organizations. "Despite the pervasiveness of institutions in the life of our churches today, we have scarcely begun a careful reflection on our church-related institutions and how our faith bears on them," said Koontz.

—*Valerie Weaver*

Discipleship training program begins in France

Salunga, Pa.—The French Mennonite churches have asked Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Global Disciples Training Network to work with them to begin a discipleship training center for their young adults in September.

Dave Harnish, director of the Baltimore Youth Evangelism Service (YES) Center, has been invited as a resource person for the first three-month session. Harnish will assist Vincent Fernandez in directing the training to be held at the Bienenberg Bible School in Liestal, Switzerland. Fernandez is pastor at the Mennonite fellowship in Longwy, France, and has taught at the YES discipleship training centers in Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Not just a transplant. Four young adults were commissioned by EMM on May 26 to join the French-speaking training group. Andrew Bornman, Rodney Brenneman, Natalie Duckman, and Sheila Siegrist are currently training at the Baltimore YES Center. They arrive in Longwy in early July to study French and then to live with families to practice their language skills.

"I don't want to see the YES program transplanted 'as is' in France," says Harnish, adding that he hopes to make elements of the training appropriate for French culture. "My vision is to see young people brought into a setting where they can find a safe place for healing in their own lives, come face-to-face with the needs of the world, and be released to minister that healing to others."

The teams will spend four months on outreach throughout France, assisting church plantings and existing Mennonite churches with community evangelism.

"Hopefully we will continue to channel young adults to international training locations," says Dan Gehman, personnel coordinator for EMM's Discipleship Ministries department. He says one of the goals for the new discipleship training center is "to develop in French young adults an understanding of what it means to be a Christian and a part of the Mennonite church."

—*Carol Wert*

Vincent Fernandez prays for a young man after a service at Christ the King Community Church, Lancaster, Pa. Fernandez will direct a new discipleship training program in France.

'Good debate is like good jazz'

Scholars call conflict a hallmark of Mennonite history; discord a sign of life

Goshen, Ind. (GC)—Conflict, more than consensus, marks Mennonite history, according to a group of academics involved in Anabaptist studies. Furthermore, conflict isn't bad, they conclude.

Discord can be a sign of life, said Arnold Snyder of Conrad Grebel College. "It shows the patient has a pulse." So long as Mennonites have a core of values to serve as a melody, good debate is like good jazz with everyone building variations on a theme, he said.

Snyder, an associate professor of history, was among the speakers at "Mennonites and Conflict: New Directions in Scholarship," a research seminar held June 6-8 at Goshen (Ind.) College. The meeting brought together graduate students and professors in history, sociology, and communication.

The idea of helpful conflict is new to many, said Beulah Hostetler, an independent scholar. "Some of us have to turn our minds around a few times to get to that," she said. "I'm almost there."

Snyder and Hostetler were two of four speakers who summarized the seminar before about 50 people at a public session June 8. Thomas Meyers, a professor of sociology at GC, and Stephen Ainlay, dean of Holy Cross College, were the others. John Roth, GC professor of history and editor of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, also spoke.

The seminar challenged much of what is central to being Mennonite, said Fred Kniss, associate professor of sociology at Loyola University-Chicago. While Mennonites often see themselves as having clear convictions and solid boundaries between themselves and the world, they are actually more likely to be in near-continual conflict, influencing and being influenced by society, he said.

Construct or consume. A lack of historical placidity would put a new perspective on debates over the place of homosexuals in congregations and the integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church, Kniss said. "Viewing conflict as normal and consensus with suspicion may have an effect on how we look at contemporary social questions."

Conflict can construct or consume, Meyers said. Mennonite history is far from peaceable, he added. "The question is, why conflict hasn't been studied as conflict," he said. There is a tendency to deny conflict because it is seen as opposing Mennonite ideals of unity and peace.

Ideals colliding? Indeed, consensus and conflict may be the clash of ideals against ideals, Ainlay said. Goals of discipleship, the church as the body of Christ and the priesthood of believers where followers look for accountability, may collide with hopes for submission, humility, and meekness.

The seminar was built around a paper by Ainlay and Kniss titled "Mennonites and Conflict: Reexamining Mennonite History and Contemporary Life." Another 11 scholars tested the argument using weddings, publications, college closings, the formation of churches, and other happenings as case studies.—*Wayne Steffen*

'New life inside fences'

Chorus brings together Mennonites and inmates

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Elvera Voth has prepared choruses for noted conductors such as Robert Shaw. She has even directed choirs in locations as remote as northeastern Russia. But, if Voth could choose one concert to relive again, she says it would be the concert she conducted at the Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan., that included singers from a state prison.

Inmates and church members. On June 2, over 200 people packed into this Mennonite church to listen to eight men from the minimum security unit of the Lansing (Kan.) Correctional Facility sing in a men's chorus. Works included in the 1 1/2 hour performance ranged from a Gregorian chant to Franz Schubert to the traditional spiritual, "There Is a Balm in Gilead."

The inmates, who wore blue work shirts with jeans, were joined by 11 men from the Rainbow church, three musicians from the Kansas City Lyric Opera, and two Mennonite choral conductors—Marles Preheim, North Newton, Kan., and Don Peters, Henderson, Neb.

Voth retired to Kansas City 1 1/2 years ago, after 35 years in Alaska where she founded the music department at the University of Alaska Anchorage, the Anchorage Opera, and the Alaska Chamber Singers. She initiated the project last October, traveling 60 miles two to three times each week to practice with the inmates at the Lansing Correctional Facility. While few of the men could read music, she taught them songs composed in German, Latin, and Spanish, as well as English.

'It's in our bones.' "When I was teaching them the Gregorian chant, I told them that this ancient music is a part of us; it is in our bones," she says.

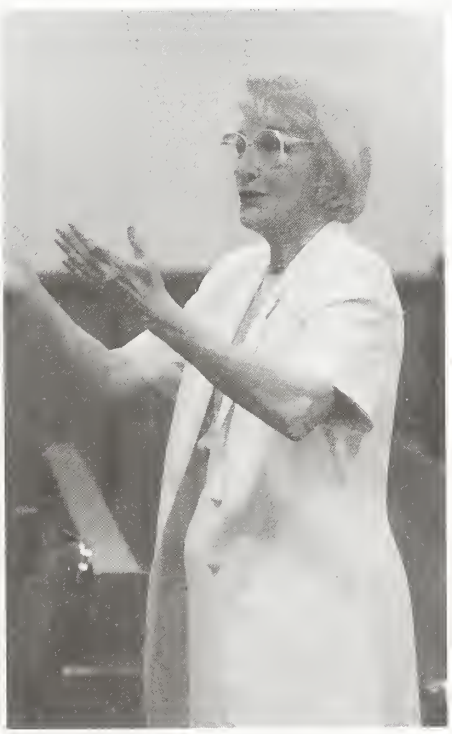
To her surprise, she found that sometimes when the inmates had learned a song, they closed their eyes when they sang it as if to block out their surroundings. "I never had that happen to me before as a conductor," she says.

About once a month, a number of men from the Rainbow congregation would join them, which helped the inmates learn the music more quickly, Voth says. During the performance, one inmate shared how they appreciated the fact that the Rainbow church men had practiced with them in the prison. He then turned to Voth and said, "We appreciate you so much. You give us new life inside those prison fences."

The audience—which included prison administrators, families of the inmates, and church members—was moved to tears at times, particularly during the solos of two of the inmates, one of whom had grown up within three blocks of the church. "It was poignant in many ways. The makeup of the performers was so different, but we were able to meet on the same turf," says Preheim, who had been a student of Voth's at Freeman (S.D.) Junior Academy in the late 1940s.

Voth, who will prepare choruses for the Utah Festival Opera this summer, plans to conduct a chorus again at the Lansing Correctional Facility this fall.

"Over the years, I've been involved with many wonderful musical events," says Voth. "But this one was unique because there were so many layers of emotions involved. This event changed my life and, hopefully, it changed other people's lives, too."—*Carla Reimer*



Elvera Roth conducts a chorus that includes prison inmates and members of the Rainbow Mennonite Church.

Pink flamingos are a typical sight for members of the Bellwood Mennonite Church in Milford, Neb. "Fla" and "Mingo" have been traveling to the yards of church members. To get rid of these lawn ornaments, one must mail a minimum contribution of $10 to the youth group, along with a destination card to indicate whose yard should be their next home. A Pink Flamingo Team then picks them up and moves them to the next lawn. Those who have hosted Fla and Mingo then belong to the Pink Flamingo Club and are assured that the flamingos will not visit them again.

The youth group is hoping that Fla and Mingo will help send them to Orlando 97.

—*The Challenge*

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Young people's art is decorating the halls of a retirement home through a new partnership between Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School and Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa. Landis Homes selects one piece of art from LMH's spring fine arts festival to become part of the home's permanent art collection that hangs in their new apartment building, Harvest View. In return, Landis Homes makes a contribution to the LMH art program.

Last year's selection was a watercolor entitled "Park Benches" by Nigel Green. This year Kristine Hess was the winner with her acrylic work "Blue Dancer." Green and Hess were honored at a recognition program on May 15.

"We hope the work of the young will bless the old," says Louise Stoltzfus, director of the People's Place Gallery who led the jury process. "And we hope the support of the old will bless the young."

—*Deborah Laws-Landis*

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A letter from a senior citizen is featured in a public service radio spot called "Stop the Violence" produced by Mennonite Board of Missions. Two years ago Joe Garber of Edmonton, Alta., drafted a letter calling for action on the "extreme manifestations of violence everywhere, even in our homes: shootings, mass murders, spouse abuse, street crime, guns, weapons, drive-by shootings, religious and racial hatred, ethnic hatred, inner-city conflicts, millions of starving poor, child abuse."

Garber sent his call to action to legislators, editors, speakers, churchwide leaders, and church agencies asking for a variety of responses. To date, 225 radio stations have confirmed the use of the public service spots.

Garber turns 80 in October.

—*Melodie Davis*

Ohio congregation leads Mennonite Board of Missions into work in Dagestan

Harrisonburg, Va.(MBM)—Members of an Ohio church, in partnership with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), will launch a new ministry of Christian presence in Dagestan, a predominantly Muslim republic of the former Soviet Union, at the invitation of its people.

Phil and Alice Shenk of Northridge Christian Fellowship in Springfield, Ohio, were officially appointed as general mission workers to Dagestan on behalf of the MBM by the board of directors who met here June 6.

The Shenks will mark the first Anabaptist presence in the mountainous area near the Caspian Sea in southern Russia. Although the Shenks received a three-year appointment, they will spend two years living among the Tabasarans, one of 35 linguistic groups near the eastern end of the Caucasus mountain region. The final year will begin a time to evaluate continued presence in the region, which has been considered completely Muslim since the eighth century.

Church hasn't been present. While independence groups in neighboring Chechnya have battled the central government in Russia, Dagestan has maintained stable relations. Indeed, the region's high mountain ranges and remote valleys have coupled with the many language groups to limit Western Christian presence. "The church of any type has not been present at least for the last 100 years," says Phil Shenk, who will step down from his role as pastor of Northridge Christian Fellowship to begin the new assignment July 1. "There is a passion within me for people for whom the church has not been present. It is only fair that the love and redemption of Christ be available to them."

The first chapter of Mennonite missions to Dagestan was written in May 1992, when seven people from Northridge Christian Fellowship began to pray and seek a region of the world for possible mission involvement. They had read about the "10-40 Window," a section of the world between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees south in which there is little or no Christian presence.

'Loving and listening.' Starting with 160 cultural groups listed as completely Muslim, the Ohio Mennonite Conference congregation spent over a year of research before learning about the Tabasaran people in Dagestan, which means "land of the mountains." Phil Shenk and two other members of the congregation made a 10-day exploratory visit in June 1994. During the trip Phil met a Tabasaran official, who invited him to come teach English. The Tabasarans agreed to provide housing.

Two months later, Shenk began talking with Dale Schumm, MBM director for Asia and the Middle East, to explore a partnership between MBM and Friends of the Tabasaran, a mission group organized by Northridge.

The Shenks have six children. Financial support for the family will come equally from MBM, the Shenks, and Friends of the Tabasaran.

"Our purpose is to love and to listen and to build a relationship," says Phil Shenk.—*Tom Price*

Living stones. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Sally Jacober and Paul Regehr, the last two Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers in the Our Lady of Health housing project in Belo Jardim, Brazil, stand with Reginaldo Mazzon (middle), the project's founder, during a May celebration to commemorate MCC's 17-year participation in the program. Some 320 families received homes during this time. As homes are constructed on the community's last available lots, MCC is phasing out its involvement with the housing project.

The project began in 1978 when Mazzon, a priest, became concerned about the tottering shacks poor families were putting up on a swamp on the city's lower extremity. Mazzon acquired funding from his native Italy and purchased several acres of land on a hillside on the edge of Belo Jardim. Then he learned MCC might be able to provide workers to help organize construction. Fourteen workers have served in the years since.

Gradually the new homeowners began to help administer the project. They formed a committee to interview potential homeowners and spearheaded an ongoing struggle to obtain city water and electrical services for the community. Construction begins after the committee has selected some 15-30 new families. Work bees are held so families can help one another build their foundations. MCC provides foundation stones to those who participate in the bees.

Once the walls are up, the homeowners becomes eligible for a no-interest loan from the local Catholic parish to purchase the more expensive wooden doors, windows, and roofing materials. "This intermingling of donation with individual effort gives residents a strong sense of accomplishment," says Audrey Patterson, an MCC worker in the nearby area of Tacaimbo.

Although MCC activities in Belo Jardim have concentrated on the housing project, other involvements have emerged as well—adult literacy, a women's sewing co-op, and a small artisans group, a mother-child health program, a first-aid cupboard and several generations of youth groups. Vacation Bible schools have also been popular. These activities will continue but with less MCC support. As the community's final lots emerge as homes, MCC is phasing out its work with the project.

Singing history. *Amasaman, Ghana (MBM)*—A choir member from a Mennonite congregation in Amasaman, Ghana, sings in a special performance. This year marks the 40th anniversary of a Mennonite presence in Ghana, where the Ghana Mennonite Church has about a dozen congregations and 800 members.

- **Mennonites meet with Irish Protestants.** Mennonite Central Committee workers John and Naomi Lederach met with the largest Protestant body in Northern Ireland on June 3-7. The Lederachs, living in Belfast, gave a report to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church regarding the mediation training of the 14-member "Conciliation Panel" recently appointed by the church body. Mediator Joe Campbell and the Lederachs led 12 three-hour training sessions with the panel.

- **MBM house closes.** The Voluntary Service unit of Mennonite Board of Missions in Mashulaville, Miss., will close in August. Saul Murcia, MBM's VS coordinator, cites a lack of VS assignments, lack of local leadership, and burn-out of existing leadership. The future of the property is undecided.

- **Two complete pastoral program.** The Pastoral Studies Distance Education Program, an undergraduate program to prepare people for ministry, granted its first two certificates of completion for the course, "Leading God's People" to Evan Zehr, Lowville, N.Y., and Carol Ann Erb Gingerich, Zurich, Ont. The correspondence course is a cooperative effort of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., Hesston (Kan.) College, and Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man.

- **CPT seeks workers.** Applications are now being accepted for the next Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) training Dec. 31-Jan. 21 in Chicago. Openings for full-time Christian Peacemaker Corps are for terms of three years supported by living costs and a minimal stipend. The Reserve Corps is an option for those wishing to participate for two weeks to two months annually. More information is available from Janice Kulp Long at 540 951-2788.

- **New appointments:**

Dwain Hartzler, athletic director, Goshen (Ind.) College.

Val Hershberger, volleyball coach, physical education professor, and assistant athletic director, Goshen College.

Shelly Kindig, women's tennis coach, Goshen College.

Jorge Vallejos, director of short-term service, Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Denton R. Jantzi was ordained at Wood River (Neb.) Mennonite Church on May 5 by Noah Kolb. David Mann gave the message.

- **Coming events:**

Annual barbecue and auction, Locust Grove Mennonite School, Smoketown, Pa., July 19-20. Includes silent auction, children's festival, craft items, quilts, garden equipment, and baked goods. More information available from 717 394-7107.

Single parent families retreat, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Aug. 4-9. More information available from 800 829-1021.

19th annual Indiana Mennonite slow-pitch softball tourney, Fort Wayne, Ind., Aug. 31 and Sept. 1-2. Tournaments for both men and women. Entry fee is $125.00 and the deadline is Aug. 1. All profits go to Mennonite Central Committee. More information from Roger R. Miller at 219 637-3523.

"No Longer Alone" conference on mental illness, Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church, Oct. 5. The conference is designed for people with mental illness, their families, pastors, church leaders, and mental health care professionals. Sponsored by Philhaven behavioral healthcare services, No Longer Alone Ministries, Mennonite Central Committee East, and Mennonite Mutual Aid. Keynote speaker is John Toews. Registration deadline is Sept. 27. More information is available from 717 270-2400.

- **Job openings:**

Bible instructor, Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore. Teaching duties as department head include Anabaptist history and theology and New and Old Testament studies. Other responsibilities like coordination of chapels to be determined. Contact administrator Eric Martin at 503 363-2000.

German teacher, Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind. Part-time position for 1996-97 school year. Send résumé to Allan Dueck, principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

Staff positions, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. Male and female dorm adviser positions available in July. Paid position includes apartment and benefits. Part-time custodial position begins mid-August. Flexible hours, 15-25 hours per week. More information is available from LMH at 717 299-0436.

Staff positions, Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore. Head girls resident director opening is full-time, ten-month salaried position. Assistant girls and assistant boys resident director positions open as full-time voluntary service. Coaching positions in girls basketball and boys soccer are also available. Contact administrator Eric Martin at 503 363-2000.

NEW MEMBERS

Chestnut Ridge, Orrville, Ohio: Jerry Horst and James White.

East Union, Kalona, Iowa: Bridgette Yoder and Brenna Tadlock.

Erisman, Manheim, Pa.: Jonathan Haldeman, Jered Hess, Jessica Martin, Justin Weaver, and Matthew Weaver.

First, Nampa, Idaho: Peter Troyer, Joe Earnest, Dennis Oesch, Luke Shellenberger, Greg Shenk, Bob Bass, Deana Bass, Mike Reams, Bev Reams, Ed Stauffer, Dora Stauffer, Bruce Bowers, Sylvia Bowers, Michael Stowell, Nate Penny, Ashley Penny, Shari Hopper, Bill Benger, Linda Benger, and Stephanie Hamilton.

Franconia, Pa.: Stacy Clemmer, Lisa Coffman, Brian Conklin, Dawn Conklin, William Halteman, Joanna Haman, Jonathan Hunsinger, Jonathan Landis, Steve Lendenmann, Dennis Moyer, Joan Moyer, Ryan Reinford, Zenaida Ramos-Rivera, Janice Richter, Rob Richter, David Rotelle, Roberta Rotelle, and Timothy Shreiner.

Holdeman, Wakarusa, Ind.: Norman and Karen Cender, Aaron Gnagey, Karen Schreck, Joe Slabach, Jodi Risser, and Ray Schreck.

MARRIAGES

Beachy-Eash: Douglas Beachy, Goshen, Ind., and Sheila Eash, Middlebury, Ind. (First), May 4, by Robert Riegsecker and Steve Huber.

Becker-Weaver: Joel Becker, Richardson, Tex., and Crissa Weaver, Richardson, Tex. (Gulfhaven), May 25, by David Weaver Sr.

Borzik-Schafer: Cecil Borzik, Gulfport, Miss., and Samantha Schafer, Gulfport, Miss. (Gulfhaven), May 11, by Dave Weaver.

Burnett-Grove: Tammy Burnett, Lyndhurst, Va., and Ronnie Grove, Lyndhurst, Va. (Springdale), June 1, by Mark and Kathy Wenger.

Derstine-Halteman: Kevin Derstine, Dublin, Pa. (Deep Run East), and Karen Halteman, Telford, Pa. (Franconia), June 1, by John M. Ehst.

Dorsey-Yoder: Michele Dorsey, Toledo, Ohio, and Vincent Yoder, Wooster, Ohio (Wooster), April 27, by Wayne A. Nitzsche.

Kunkel-Shull: Kristina Kunkel, Harrisonburg, Va. (Landisville), and Randall Shull, Harrisonburg, Va., June 1, by Sam Thomas.

BIRTHS

Albrecht, Betty and Carson, Newton, Kan., David Nathan (second child), May 30.

Bass, Deana Muller and Bob, Nampa, Idaho, Wade Tatman (second child), April 20.

Beachy, Linda Meader and Dean, Walnut Creek, Ohio, Benjamin Dean (second child), May 23.

Bechler, Pamela Copenhagen and Kevin, Bad Axe, Mich., Heather Sue (second child), May 9.

Let there be sight. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Julia Ramirez is among hundreds of individuals who have received eyeglasses in Chalatenango Province, El Salvador. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is donating used glasses to a program run by a Catholic health program.

Ramirez is a member of the Guarjila weavers, a group that markets wristbands and keychains to MCC's Selfhelp Crafts of the World. "Many rural folks suffer from headaches, partially due to their need for eyeglasses," says MCC worker Pauline Martin. "Craft producers who do fine handiwork often tell me they can't work long hours because of headaches. Without eyeglasses, they also make mistakes in their weaving, especially in counting the threads and following various patterns."

MCC helped collect some 2,000 pairs of eyeglasses for the project with the help of the Akron (Pa.) Lions Club and Brother's Brother, a charitable organization based in Pittsburgh. MCC is accepting used eyeglasses that have minimal correction for astigmatism. Further specifications are available from regional and provincial MCC offices.

Bender, Laurie Lauterbach and Tom, Salisbury, Pa., Joel David (second child), April 29.

Benner, Karyn Landis and Gary, Harleysville, Pa., Micah James (first child), May 26.

Berkey, Connie Wyse and Dennis, Topeka, Ind., Jacob James (fourth child), June 2.

Clemens, Angie Bauman and Jim, Wheaton, Ill., Alexander Joseph (first child), born Jan. 29, 1995, received for adoption Feb. 23, 1996.

Dougan, Liz Hadland and Kevin, Kitchener, Ont., Quinn Charles Malcolm (first child), May 22.

Grieser, Joyce Beckhorn and Joe, Clarksville, Mich., Terrance Daniel (second child), May 23.

Hamsher, Jocelyn Dunn and Bruce, Sugarcreek, Ohio, Micah Joel (first child), May 20.

Kallina, Della Fry and Kurt, East Peoria, Ill., Ryan Joseph (first child), May 26.

Kirmse, Wilma Smith and Rene, London, Ont., Natasha Elizabeth (second child), May 23.

Litwiller, Marilyn Walters and Jeff, Sarasota, Fla., Jamie Isaiah (third child), May 20.

Martin, Annette Miller and Rick, Versailles, Mo., Zachary Elmer (second child), April 20.

Mast, Laura Mann and Joel, Springfield, Ohio, Alexandria Joelle (first child), May 5.

Mather, Martha Fisher and Jim, State College, Pa., Stephen Jeffrey (second child), May 30.

Mumaw, Loree Siegrist and Jim, Longview, Tex., Kinsey Mae (first child), June 2.

Naisby, Joanne Bean and Brett, Plattsville, Ont., Shawn Robertson (first child), April 21.

Oesch, Jana Earnest and Michael, Nampa, Idaho, Lorren Kristine (first child), March 4.

Parcell, Eva Gagnon and Bill, Wakarusa, Ind., Sarah Ann (first child), June 1.

Perez, Kathy and Gilbert, Kalona, Iowa, Casey Marie (fourth child), May 29.

Rhoads, Gabriela Damian and Donald, Manheim, Pa., Jeremy Lamar (first child), May 25.

Rice, Brenda Allebach and Daryl, Perkasie, Pa., Samuel Allebach (first child), April 21.

Rochlitz, Gayle Abbey and Sid, Caldwell, Idaho, McKayla Ann (fifth child), March 7.

Schlabach, Trinity Rupel and Brian, Wolcottville, Ind., Olivia Nicole (second child), May 24.

Schrag, LeAnn and Leslie, Newton, Kan., Sierah Praise (fourth child), May 22.

Shenk, Sharon Burkholder and

Alan, Macon, Miss., Rachel Janae (second child), May 17.

Smucker, Faith King and Jeff, Bird-in-Hand, Pa., Marchelle Renee (second child), May 18.

DEATHS

Bauman, Nancy Martin, 72, Elmira, Ont. Born: July 17, 1923, St. Jacobs, Ont., to Levi and Susannah Hoffman Martin. Died: May 5, 1996, London, Ont., of a brain aneurysm. Survivors—sons: Dale, Brian, Steven; brothers and sisters: Cleason, Emmanuel, Leroy, and Melinda Martin, Mary Wideman, Edna Bauman, Eleanor Metzger; 5 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Orton Bauman (husband). Funeral and burial: May 8, Floradale Mennonite Church, by J. Lester Kehl and Art Byer.

Brenneman, Lula M. Martin, 89, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Sept. 30, 1907, to Edward and Barbara Yoder Martin. Died: May 30, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—children: Marilyn, Lores Hochstetler, Michael, Karen Stalter; brothers and sisters: Emerson, Robert, and Russell Martin, Amy White; 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Noah V. Brenneman (husband). Funeral: June 2, East Union Mennonite Church, by Michael Loss, Don Brenneman, and David L. Yoder. Burial: Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Buehler, Sarah Brubacher, 89, Kitchener, Ont. Born: March 29, 1907, Elmira, Ont., to Henry S. and Hannah Brubacher. Died: May 22, 1996, Kitchener, Ont. Survivors—children: Lena McAvoy, Emma Dundon, Zenas Buehler; brothers: Irvine, Emerson; 6 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Edwin M. Buehler (husband), one son, and three daughters. Funeral and burial: May 28, Floradale Mennonite Church, by Art Byler.

Eberly, Mabel, 86, Glendale, Ariz. Born: April 6, 1910, Wayne County, Ohio. Died: May 24, 1996, Glendale, Ariz. Survivors—husband: David Eberly; children: Alice Mast, Jerald; sisters: Irene Lehman, Mary Kilmer; 4 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 29, Grace Mennonite Church, by Ben Eberly, Brad Eberly, and James Kropf. Burial: Resthaven Cemetery.

Garber, Roy C., 92, Lowpoint, Ill. Born: May 24, 1904, Fisher, Ill., to Christian and Laura Gautsche Garber. Died: June 2, 1996, Metamora, Ill. Survivors—wife: Pearl Stoller Garber; children: Robert C., LeRoy, Ronald, Beulah Fierce, Frances Ulrich; 19 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 6, Metamora Mennonite Church, by Robert Nolt and Dennis Kennell. Burial: Stewart-Harmony Cemetery.

Hostetler, Samuel D., 77, Kouts, Ind. Born: July 19, 1918, Apple Creek, Ohio, to Daniel E. and Mary E. Yoder Hostetler. Died: May 26, 1996, Merrillville, Ind. Survivors—wife: Leila Good Hostetler; children: Linda Dreyer, Pat Agnew, Peg Patel, Sam Jr.; brothers and sisters: Fred, Dan, Jemima Miller, Elizabeth Hershberger; 9 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 29, Hopewell Mennonite Church, by LeRoy Kennel.

Hunsberger, Gordon, 81, St. Jacobs, Ont. Born: Dec. 11, 1914, Bridgeport, Ont., to Abram and Mary Ida Wideman Hunsberger. Died: May 20, 1996, St. Jacobs, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Matilda Weber Hunsberger; children: Margaret, Robert, Brian; brothers: Albert, Wilson; 4 grandchildren. Predeceased by an infant son and daughter (twins). Funeral: May 26, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel and Phyllis Tribby. Burial: Erb Street Mennonite Church Cemetery (cremated).

Kanagy, Lloyd E., 80, West Liberty, Ohio. Born: Dec. 17, 1915, Champaign County, Ohio, to Darius C. and Ola Mae Yoder Kanagy. Died: May 20, 1996, West Liberty, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Berdena B. Hostetler Kanagy; children: D. Calvin, Myrna Magrew, Violet Brunk; 3 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 24, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, by Larry Augsburger.

Kurtz, Elsie Stoltzfus, 95, Elverson, Pa. Born: Feb. 11, 1901, Churchtown, Pa., to Elam and Katie Beiler Stoltzfus. Died: May 23, 1996, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—husband: Christian J. Kurtz; children: Elam, John, Lena Carpenter, Paul, Chester, Caroline Plank, Calvin; 38 grandchildren, 84 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 27, Conestoga Mennonite Church, by Harvey Z. Stoltzfus, Nathan Stoltzfus, Harold Carpenter, and James Kurtz. Burial: Pine Grove Cemetery.

Nussbaum, Willis L., 69, Kidron, Ohio. Born: June 27, 1926, Massillon, Ohio, to Lydia Nussbaum. Died: May 29, 1996, Massillon, Ohio, of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Bessie Lehman Nussbaum; daughters: Dolores Gerber, Aldine, Grace Miller, Goldie Yoder, Glenda Masters, JoAnn Martin; 9 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 1, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, by Dennis R. Kuhns.

Rhodes, Frances Branner, 82, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Aug. 20, 1913, Broadway, Va., to Charles C. and Josephine Brunk Branner. Died: May 25, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va., of cancer. Survivors—sons: Fred B., Edward L.; brother and sister: John R. Branner, Phoebe Branner Brenneman; one grandchild, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Lloyd B. Rhodes (husband). Memorial service: May 28, Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, by Wayne North, Catherine Longenecker, and Clarence Moyers. Burial: Lindale Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Schmucker, John S., 60, Spencerville, Ind. Born: June 10, 1935, Harlan, Ind., to Samuel and Rosa Miller Schmucker. Died: April 26, 1996, Spencerville, Ind., of respiratory failure. Survivors—wife: Norma Jean Frisby Schmucker; children: Randy, Cheri Chambers, Karen; brothers and sisters: Ben, David, Lucy Freese, Rosena Caldwell; 4 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ron (son). Funeral: April 29, North Leo Mennonite Church, by Doug Zehr. Burial: Yaggy Cemetery.

Shellenberger, Margaret Miller, 74, Mount Joy, Pa. Born: March 14, 1922, East Donegal Twp., Pa., to Elmer R. and Martha Garber Miller. Died: June 1, 1996, Mount Joy, Pa. Survivors—husband: Shelley R. Shellenberger; children: Eileen Detweiler, Richard M., Donald, Henry, Harold; sisters: Helen Miller, Lois M. Martin; 14 grandchildren. Funeral: June 5, Mount Joy Mennonite Church, by Joe Sherer, Ervin Stutzman, and Clarence Stauffer. Burial: Kraybill Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Stutzman, Reginald Wayne, 49, Milford, Neb. Born: Feb. 8, 1947, Milford, Neb., to Wayne and Maxine Earnest Stutzman. Died: June 4, 1996, Lincoln, Neb., of liver failure. Survivors—wife: Elaine Hake Stutzman; sons: Christopher, Cody; stepdaughter: Shannon Jones; brothers: Kim, Claude; one grandchild. Funeral and burial: June 6, East Fairview Mennonite Church, by Bob Troyer and Lloyd Gingerich.

Troyer, Ethel I. Zook, 92, West Liberty, Ohio. Born: Feb. 14, 1904, New Castle, Pa., to Enoch and Mary Spiker Zook. Died: May 13, 1996, West Liberty, Ohio. Survivors—stepchildren: Robert, Fred, Lucille Christophel; brothers and sisters: Orren and Homer Zook, Sarah Eshleman, Mary Emman Barkley; 17 step-grandchildren, 42 stepgreat-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Menno Troyer (husband) and Leonard (stepson). Congregational membership: Oak Grove Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: May 15, Salem Mennonite Church, by Larry Augsburger.

Wenger, John Robert, Sr., 100, Linville, Va. Born: Feb. 2, 1896, Linville, Va., to Jacob C. and Susanna Virginia Suter Wenger. Died: May 31, 1996, Linville, Va. Survivors—children: Evelyn Basinger, Joanna Lehman, Margaret Gale, Emily Peachey, John R. Jr., David; 19 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Dorothy Mellinger Wenger (second wife) and Bertie Eby Wenger (first wife). Funeral and burial: June 4, Lindale Mennonite Church, by Loren Horst and Ralph W. Ziegler.

Yoder, Dorothy E. Esch, 87, West Liberty, Ohio. Born: Oct. 6, 1908, Montmorency County, Mich., to Joseph and Eva Plank Esch. Died: May 23, 1996, West Liberty, Ohio. Survivors—children: Carl, Wilfred, Forest, Melvin, Kathy Lowry; sisters: Mildred and Arda Esch; 15 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elbert Jay Yoder (husband). Funeral and burial: May 27, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, by Larry Augsburger.

Yutzy, Wayne J., 69, Orrville, Ohio. Born: April 30, 1926, to John N. and Lovina Miller Yutzy. Died: March 24, 1996, Wooster, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Esther Hershberger Yutzy;children: Robert, Waunita Witmer, Richard; brothers and sisters: Irvin, Freeman, and Wilma Yutzy, Mary Mullet, Verna Yoder; 6 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 27, Wooster Mennonite Church, by Wayne A. Nitzsche and Ray Mullet. Burial: Maple Grove Memorial Park.

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THE LAST WORD

What's in a border? (1)

I think we've found it: the "tough issue" of integration, the "nitty gritty" that has the potential of slowing down the merger of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

During the six years before Wichita '95, when we were exploring possible merger, I kept hearing talk about the day we were going to have to face "the difficult issues" of merger. Some thought they'd be theology—though a joint *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* seemed to take care of that one. Others said polity; stereotype has it that the GCs are more congregational than MCs—though even a casual observation of practice seems to give the lie to that one too.

No, the issue that may have us sweating before all this is over is the 49th parallel. In every meeting I've been in since Wichita, when integration is on the agenda, close to two-thirds of the time is spent on "the Canadian question."

Now I realize it's presumptuous for a U.S. MC to describe this "question" with any degree of objectivity. In fact, to even try may be to perpetuate what some Canadians see as making the border an issue in the first place. But risking both, I'll try:

What the issue is all about is perhaps best illustrated by structure. North of the 49th parallel, Mennonite congregations belong to provincial conferences, which in turn have joined together to form a national organization, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC). With the acceptance of the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada last July, CMC is now a fully integrated body numbering more than 30,000.

CMC does a lot of work we U.S. MCs are used to doing at the denominational level: publishing, ministerial leadership, missions, education. CMC meets every year for fellowship and business, but it also participates in the broader GC denominational sessions every three years.

We've nothing comparable in the U.S. Our districts and area conferences, both GC and MC, relate directly to the denomination. Not a few U.S. Mennonites look at the Canadian way of operating as just another layer of structure.

But the Canadian "issue" is more than structure. As J. Robert Charles noted in his perspective two issues ago ("Some Second Thoughts About Nationalism, *Gospel Herald*, June 11, page 8), Canadian and U.S. Mennonites have different ways of viewing the world. Canadians have been able to affirm both their national citizenship *and* their kingdom membership. That's almost unthinkable to many south of the border, where to be a kingdom citizen is to call into question much of what the nation is about.

There are many reasons for the difference. Not the least is the dominance that the United States has played in the world. We who are part of the church in this country most often shudder in aversion to what our country does in our name around the world—and we work hard to distance ourselves from these actions.

Because the GCs have historically had 40 percent or more of their members north of the border, they have been more attuned to these issues than have we MCs. But former MCs in Canada say this is not "a GC problem." The border has largely been unrecognized in MC circles because only some 10 percent of our membership has been in Canada, mostly in Ontario.

On the U.S. side, our assumption has been that the larger denominational assemblies represented both countries—without realizing how much U.S. agenda has overshadowed these gatherings. During the Vietnam War, for example, Mennonite General Conference (as our denominational structure was then called) spent considerable time drafting statements about the war to send to governments. True, we sent them to both Washington and Ottawa. But we didn't seem to realize, Canadians point out, that we were making these statements because of the U.S., not the Canadian, actions in Southeast Asia.

Canadian MCs are also quick to note that they have had to sit through General Assembly business sessions dealing with Mennonite Mutual Aid—which currently does not operate in Canada. Not only has MMA been part of the total denominational agenda, but until recently no one even bothered to recognize publicly that this is U.S.-only business.

So what do we do with the 49th parallel in the new integrated Mennonite church? More about that next week.—*jlp*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Placing the discussion of patriotism back into the context of real Christian living does not resolve all the issues. But it does place the tensions where they should be: in the presence of the worship of our God.

Are Christians patriots? Should we be?

If some of my Christian convictions—extending hospitality, responding to needs, living in harmony—look like love for my country, that's okay with me.

by Mark Thiessen Nation

Two summers ago I attended the Fourth of July parade in my home town in Illinois. To any outsider, the parade would have looked totally pathetic. But for the people from this poor community of 3,000, it was a matter of some pride. The floats, sponsored by businesses whose profits were slight, may not have been elaborate, but they were created with pride and staffed by mostly familiar faces.

But what I remember most were the veterans marching. There were only four. One was the father of one of my best friends since I was four. Marion sported a considerable gut and had long outgrown his uniform, but he marched with pride. Earlier in the spring Marion had shown me pictures of the battleship he had been on during World War II, and he told me stories from his time in the Navy. There was no glee in Marion's voice about killing others. There was a simple, subdued pride that he did what he was asked to do by his country because he loved his family, his friends from home, and—what was a more vague entity—the United States of America.

Ammon Hennacy, a leader of the Catholic

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Christine Maust:
What patriotism means to me 3

Martha Kolb-Wyckoff:
Do you want to be well? 6

Associate groups get acquainted and discuss future in integration . . . 9

Edmonton Mennonites to begin community for families at risk 10

Being a pacifist between wars is like being a vegetarian between meals. It is when the violence is real that our commitment to love our enemies is tested.

Worker Movement, once said: "Being a pacifist between wars is like being a vegetarian between meals." That statement is a reminder. Yes, it is when the most tempting meat-laden meal is set before us that we really show whether we are committed vegetarians; it is also when shame, violence, and other threats are real for us that our commitment to love even our enemies is tested.

But it is also a distortion that we too often allow to shape our lives. For if it is *only* at the time of war or during national celebrations—such as the Fourth of July—that we realize that our convictions as Christians do not perfectly coincide with the ideals of our country, then the superficiality of our lives will be revealed by unnecessary decibel levels of our protests when wars do come. Or our falseness will be shown by an easy capitulation that reveals our true allegiance is not, after all, to the Lord Jesus but rather to our country.

We gather on Sunday mornings for what we call worship. But in Romans 12:1-12, Paul tells us that worship is "to present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice." We are to have our minds renewed; we are to be transformed by God so that we are not conformed to this world.

Renewal and transformation sound like good spiritual words, and they are. But Paul doesn't want us to forget that the spiritual is connected to our real, everyday lives. As he goes on, he tells us our love is to be genuine. We are to hate what is evil and hold fast to what is good. We are to love one another with mutual affection. We are to be humble, associating with the lowly and honoring others. Empathy is something we should learn, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. There are needs among our brothers and sisters in Christ; we should respond to them. We are to be hospitable to strangers.

Then comes the point in Romans 12 where the offense begins. For beyond all the above, we are to bless those who persecute us—not curse them as we are tempted to do. Of course not everything is in our control. But as far as it depends on us, we are to live peaceably with all. We are never to repay anyone evil for evil but are to overcome evil with good. We are never to avenge ourselves but are to leave room for the wrath of God.

These verses in Romans 12 provide an incredibly rich and compact summary of the basic structure of our life together as a church in the midst of the world. Living this way not only enriches our own lives, but it also testifies to the Lord who makes our lives possible. If our convictions are lived with enough clarity, the offense of pacifism is mitigated and the underlying convictions about loving our enemies and repaying evil with good are rendered intelligible and credible.

During the Persian Gulf War, I was pastoring a Disciples of Christ Church in Orestes, Ind., a village of 500 people. One of the centers of pride in Orestes was a 200-year-old oak tree that stood in my yard, which was in the center of the village. In fact, the oak tree in my yard was basically considered community property. Someone in Orestes decided that it was only appropriate that my tree—the community tree—have a yellow ribbon to honor those fighting in the war. So one Friday evening this person tied a large ribbon around my tree. The next morning as I left my house, I saw the ribbon, and almost by instinct I ripped it down.

In a small town like Orestes news travels fast. The next morning before Sunday school the people in my church were all abuzz. They and many others in the village were sure that some teenager had vandalized my tree. To let the teenagers off the hook and to otherwise be honest, I told them I took it down.

The following Sunday I prepared a sermon on why I took that ribbon down; however, since most of the parishioners came to Sunday school and because I wanted them to be able to discuss what I said, I presented this "sermon" during the Sunday school hour. One particular element of their response struck me powerfully. These people probably never heard much of anything about pacifism before they had me as their pastor. And they were people who by instinct were political and social conservatives, especially regarding issues like war.

But they were not totally offended. I hope that is partly because of the trust I had established. But I am sure it is partly because this was central Indiana. These people knew of the Mennonites and Brethren in Indiana. Though they also knew the faults of many Mennonites and Brethren, they saw the convictions of these people lived with enough clarity, along with their peculiar views about war, that the community of Orestes respected them and appreciated them even if they didn't fully understand their pacifism. Thus when I did something that was potentially quite offensive, it wasn't.

But not only do clearly-lived convictions make pacifism during a war more palatable to others. If these teachings in Romans are substantially believed, taught, and embodied between wars and between national celebrations, they will shape us and our children so that we know why we cannot fully join in the celebrations of national hubris and the willingness to kill others so that we might live.

So should we as Christians consider ourselves patriots? This reminds me of a question I've wrestled with numerous times over the last few years: do I believe in tolerance? If the alternative to tolerance is narrow-minded bigotry or the act of smashing in someone's face or being nasty because they disagree with me, then the answer is, "Of course I believe in tolerance."

But the problem is that "tolerance" in our modern world usually implies that convictions are merely a private, personal matter and that religion should be treated like a hobby rather than something that fundamentally shapes our lives. What I sometimes say is: "No, I don't embrace tolerance, but I hope I embody Christian convictions. Some of those convictions— such as humility, forgiveness, loving my neighbor as myself—will sometimes look like tolerance to others; and that is okay."

And so it is with patriotism, the love and devotion to one's country. Of course, in actual practice, that implies specific loves and specific hates. There is always baggage that goes along with love of one's country, but especially during a war.

One of the problems with patriotic symbols such as flags and yellow

(continued on page 4)

What patriotism means to me

by Christine Maust

Every morning at school we follow the same routine. We stand and pledge our allegiance to the flag. I love my country, but I see no reason to commit my faith to a flag.

Most often patriotism is associated with serving your country in war. Unlike many people, I do not ever feel the urge to throw myself in front of a gun in the name of my country. I do not believe in using war to solve America's problems, so how can I say I'm patriotic?

In my mind, there are more ways to show patriotism than just on a battlefield. I demonstrate my patriotism by not becoming a statistic. By not shooting myself because of drugs and by performing well in school, I can show love for my country.

I can show my love for America by not becoming pregnant as a teen. Can one truly love one's country but continue to absorb welfare money and jeopardize the future of an American child? Obviously, the last thing our country needs is another empty mind. I can serve my country well by striving to become something besides unemployed.

So many of society's problems stem from prejudice and ignorance. I can show my patriotism by treating my neighbors like friends. By being a person who can accept anyone regardless of race, wealth, or appearance, I can send a message to all my fellow Americans: How can you say you love your country if you cannot love your fellow Americans?

Showing patriotism does not take a fancy flag stuck to the side of your house. It does not mean you must show up for fireworks at every Fourth of July celebration. True Americans are not just those loving a flag. They are the people loving the people who stand for the flag.

With this essay, Christine Maust, age 15, Meridian, Miss., won second place out of 9,000 entries in the 9th grade division of the 1996 Fleet Reserve Essay Contest. Maust is a member of Jubilee Mennonite Church.

What love we have for country is qualified by a worship of God that leads us to bless even those who persecute us if the alternative is overcoming evil with evil.

ribbons is that the message is ambiguous and dependent upon the mood of the viewers at the time. I am sure one of the intended messages of the yellow ribbons during the Gulf War was that the United States wanted its soldiers to come home safely. And, of course, with that message all of us could concur.

But were these ribbons not also tied up with solidarity with the war in general? And did they not express support for sentiments such as one soldier expressed when he wrote on one of the bombs: "If Allah doesn't answer, ask for Jesus"? Or the bumper sticker on more than one car that said, "This vehicle doesn't brake for Iraqis"?

Yes, there are loves and hates, dyings and killings, that are celebrated in patriotism. That is the problem.

Thus, I have come to say, "No, I don't embrace patriotism, but I hope I embody Christian convictions. Some of those convictions—extending hospitality, responding to needs, living in harmony, humility, and empathy— these will some of the time look like love for my country to others; and that's okay."

- Putting it this way will remind us that what is first is worship of God, who becomes flesh in Jesus—the Jesus who calls us to love our neighbors and our enemies.
- Putting it this way will remind us not to reduce the offense of the cross to some vague commitment to globalism or the peace issue.
- Putting it this way will also remind us that whatever love we have for our country is qualified by a worship of God that leads us to bless even those who persecute us and to submit even to pagan, wicked leaders (as Paul advocates in Rom. 13) if the alternative is overcoming evil with evil.

Placing the discussion of patriotism back in the context of real Christian life does not resolve all issues. But it does place the tensions where they should be: in the presence of the worship of our God.

Mark Thiessen Nation is interim pastor at Glendale (Calif.) Church of the Brethren and is completing a doctorate at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is married to Mary and has two sons, age 17 and 13. Thiessen Nation discovered Mennonites five years after becoming a Christian. "Through reading and relationships, I knew these people were describing who I was—I was an Anabaptist without knowing it," he writes.

"Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."
—Matthew 10:39-40, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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Living with Ambiguity (May 21, May 28, June 4). I think Paul and the leadership in Jerusalem agreed that idol offerings are prohibited, even if an idol doesn't exist. Belief in the power of idols still remained in the consciousness of some pagans and weak Christians. When the status of food was unknown, Paul was more lenient than most Christian leaders. Paul likely thought that sufficient doubt existed as to whether meat sold in the Corinthian market had really been offered to idols, or that sale to a Christian was a tacit desecration on the part of a pagan; either made the food permissible. If questionable meat caused a person to fall, however, Paul would not eat it.

Today there are cultures in which meals are part of ancestor worship. A Pauline solution to the Christian's dilemma is to hold a meal in memory of, rather than to ancestors and not to ask questions about the guests' unspoken thoughts. Rather, one says a blessing to God over the food, for "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

Jon Olson
Augusta, Maine

I was touched by Beryl Jantzi's relating of their family's experience in ***God's Moments Are Rarely Just Individual Events*** (June 11). I guess all down through the years, God's people have wondered why some crises end joyfully while others end in tragedy. We'll probably never know the full answer to that question until we get to heaven, but it does help those in crisis situations to know and experience how many others in their community care and love them.

I was privileged to feel this kind of love and caring in the loss of my brother a few months ago. Even though I miss him very much, having lived with him many years, I'm not walking through the valley of grief alone.

Grace Lehman
Lititz, Pa.

I was troubled by the air of distance and judgmental tone towards the editors of *Gospel Herald* and leaders in the Mennonite community in Eric Kouns' letter (May 28). I believe that we can disagree with one another, but I see no biblical example to degrade other Christians while striving to follow Jesus. Satan rejoices when we are too fearful to trust each other's desire to follow Christ. The challenge for me is learning how to confront with compassion and a desire to see the other person come to a fuller, more intimate relationship with God, without preconceived assumptions of their integrity. My prayer is that we all see the places that we may have an effect on the kingdom and continue to choose to make it a positive, biblical one that can bring others closer to God.

Name withheld upon request

I think J. Denny Weaver's excellent article defining peace church membership as agreeing to play a different game should be discussed in adult classes (***Making Sure Which Game We Are Playing***, May 21).

His game analogy seems to be on one side of a polarity between mission and identity. It is a helpful analogy when focusing on the identity side: on differences that separate us from others, on our Mennonite contribution, and when haunted by anxieties about our preservation as a peace church.

An analogy that focuses on the mission side of the polarity is the stewardship parable Jesus uses in which servants are asked to take investment risks with their master's treasure. In this analogy, the real peace church Christian is the one who trusts God enough to venture out in sharing and witnessing to the arriving kingdom. The difference is not so much on what rules we have accepted but on how much we lean on God to risk sharing the treasure with our materialistic, warring culture. I believe Jesus points to the relationship with God that enables us to risk kingdom living now instead of protecting our identity.

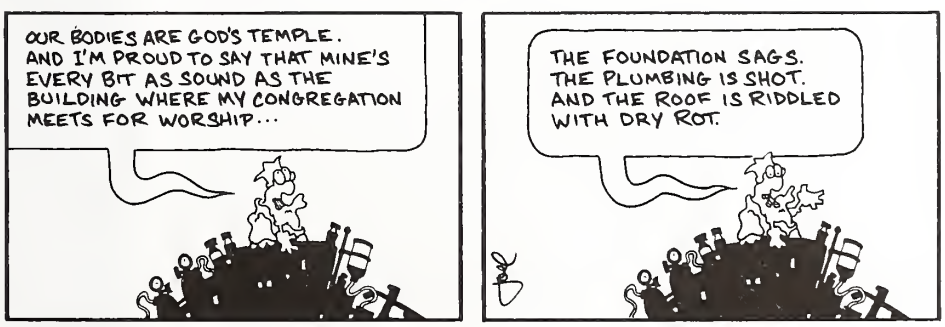
These kind of peace church Christians probably don't want to be identified by the game rules they have accepted for fear that people will take that as the motive for their witness. They do that because their religion requires it. They would likely identify themselves as one of the many weak Christians hesitatingly risking the Jesus treasure, wondering how much God will provide if they live the kingdom way now . . . via service with Mennonite Disaster Service, Christian Peacemaker Teams, work with offenders, time spent for people in trouble, passing out leaflets to taxpayers on April 15, teaching junior high Sunday school class, and sharing who we live and die for any way we can.

This focus on leaning on God to risk being part of his mission rather than clarifying identity does make it difficult for a church to attract and hold onto members who are in the military or who have materialistic lifestyles and don't want to be involved with people in difficulty. Such a church would frequently talk about what it means to be faithful investors of the treasure. But all members, however much or little they could trust God, might feel more needed, loved, and cared for than in a church that separates wheat from weeds for the sake of identity. Also, the feeling toward other Christians is not so much a friendly rivalry as a feeling that we need them, even if their beliefs are different, to help us to be faithful.

I doubt if I have been fair to J. Denny Weaver's position, and I'm afraid both of us might be thinking of ideal churches. But I would ask him if the identity concern is on his mind and whether his analogy has to do with whether one leans toward mission or identity. If that is the issue, I feel more challenged by the untidy and risky pole of mission. Our identity as a peace church might then take care of itself, perhaps in ways we had not expected.

Stan Bohn
Kingston, Jamaica

Pontius' Puddle



The question with the built-in assumption:

'Do you want to be well?'

The greatest sin in the church today is not immorality, materialism, consumerism, or any 'ism.' The most destructive thing in the church is self-righteousness.

by Martha Kolb-Wyckoff

We often greet each other with questions like, "How are you today?" or "How's it going?" These questions are no doubt more of a greeting than an indication of our concern for the well-being of the other. And in that spirit most of the time, our answers have little value for truth.

Jesus was a bit more direct in choosing his questions of greeting. According to John 5, Jesus was in Jerusalem one day walking by the pool of Bethesda—a pool known for its healing properties. People with all sorts of diseases and illnesses gathered there because they believed that an angel stirred the waters from time to time. When that happened, the first person in the water was healed.

Jesus noticed one particular man and greeted him: "Do you want to be well?" At first thought, that might seem like a strange question to a person in this man's condition—paralyzed and unable to walk. Why else would he have been lying there for 38 years waiting for his miracle if he didn't want to get well?

But there may be good reason to ask that question. It is not uncommon for someone who has been cared for so long to depend on that care and not want to take the responsibility that wellness and wholeness brings. If he could walk again then, he would need to look out for himself.

The man's answer to Jesus' question is interesting. He doesn't say, "Yes, I want to be well." Rather, he defends his situation by protesting that he is a victim. "No one ever helps me. And while I'm struggling to get in, someone always gets into the water before me." That's not a very clear or very direct response to Jesus' question. But Jesus must have heard something of the man's desire to be healed, for he tells him to get up and walk. And the man does just that.

Is there a particular message John wanted to communicate to his readers? I think so. Jesus' question to the paralyzed man also becomes his question to us. Do *you* want to be well?

Jesus began with a question concerning this man's physical health, but it was not just about physical well-being. We know that as we look at the rest of the story. This healing took place on the Sabbath, and so the man got in trouble for carrying his mat around on the Sabbath. When questioned by the Jewish authorities, he said, "Well, this man who healed me told me to 'pick up my mat and walk.' " He didn't know it was Jesus at the time. But later Jesus ran into him at the temple and told him, "You're well now. But stop sinning, or something worse might happen to you."

In Jewish thought, sin and sickness were inextricably and directly linked. While we don't understand it in quite that way, we know that all sickness is indirectly the result of sin and that illness and disability—whether emotional, mental, or spiritual—is not God's intention for

us. I have a hunch that this man's need was bigger than his physical disability.

Furthermore, I believe John wants his readers to hear and respond to Jesus' unusual question of greeting, "Do you want to be well?" This question assumes we are all lacking wholeness, that we need healing spiritually, physically, emotionally. Do we want wholeness? Can we think of ourselves as sprawled out around the pool of Bethesda waiting to be healed in some way?

It's a difficult picture in which to place ourselves. But that is the spiritual picture of all of us. We are all sin-sick, needing God's grace and forgiveness. Jesus says to the Jewish leaders in Matt. 21:31: "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John [the Baptist] came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did."

We might ask ourselves who we have more in common with; the Jewish leaders or the tax collectors and prostitutes. We must remember that the Jewish leaders were very committed to following God and to knowing the Scriptures and obeying them.

Obviously the tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners were not entering the kingdom because they were better than the Jewish leaders but rather because they were repentant. They knew they needed healing and they wanted to be healed.

We have all probably known people who are not well physically but who refuse to admit it. They deny that there is anything wrong. Diabetes or cancer growing in our bodies is not likely to go away until it is diagnosed and treated. (Even if the healing comes solely through prayer, the sickness has to be acknowledged before God.) A sick relationship will not get better until those involved acknowledge a problem and seek help. There is no hope for an addiction until it is admitted and its power acknowledged.

Today the church is filled with people who have no sense of needing anything. People who are spiritually satisfied need nothing. In fact, in many ways we resemble the Pharisees of Jesus time. The Pharisees were not bad people; their problem was not that they were wealthy, or that they practiced the wrong politics, or that they taught bad theology. Their problem was simply that they didn't recognize their spiritual needs. They didn't know they were sick; they had no sense of needing to be made well. God's grace so freely available to every one of us is of no account until we admit to being sinners and to not being whole.

The greatest sin in the church today is not immorality of any kind; it's not materialism, consumerism, or any other "ism." It is not pride, though it's close to it. The sin that I believe is most destructive to the church is self-righteousness. It's that feeling of "having our stuff together," of being self-satisfied and complacent, of feeling better than others and more righteous. Self-righteousness is certainly not the only sin the church struggles with. But if we think we've licked all the rest, then for certain self-righteousness has gotten us.

Sin is to our spiritual condition like some viruses are to our physical condition. As I understand it, once one has a fever blister, that virus remains in one's system. Most of the time our immune system will prevail over the virus, and we will not experience its destructive effects in our bodies.

In the spiritual realm, if sin is the virus that plagues us, regular and frequent confession builds a strong spiritual immune system. Confession is about admitting our failures and sins and asking for forgiveness. But in a broader sense, it is acknowledging that we are sinful, that we can never be good enough for God by our own efforts, and that we are simply needy people. We do well to stand beside the unnamed sinner of Luke 18 who did not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven but prayed, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner."

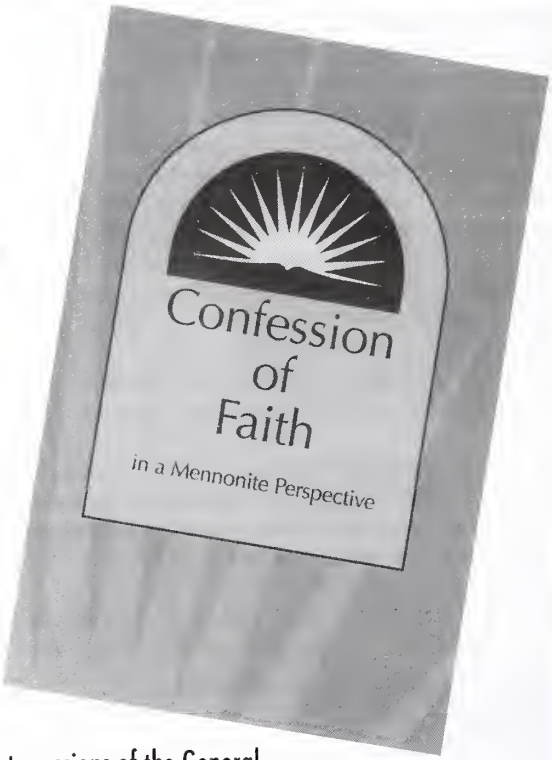
And so Jesus' question comes to each of us—this question with its built-in assumption that we are sick. "Do you want to be well, do you want to be whole?" Are we caught in the trap of needing to look good, of maintaining a pharisaic façade before our sisters and brothers? As we in congregations and within the denomination face increasing numbers of difficult issues, recognizing our neediness and becoming humbly aware of our collective and individual sinfulness may go a long way toward building up the body of Christ "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Do *you* want to be well?

Martha Kolb-Wyckoff is pastor of Taftsville (Vt.) Chapel Mennonite Fellowship. She serves as an editorial consultant for Gospel Herald.

Affirming Our Faith

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective



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Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective was adopted at the delegate sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church meeting at Wichita, Kansas, July 25-30, 1995. The 24 articles and summary statement were accepted by both groups as their statement of faith for teaching and nurture in the life of the church.

The confession of faith is arranged in four groupings:

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* Articles 9-16 examine the church and its practices.
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The commentary sections were endorsed as helpful clarification and illustrative application of the articles of the confession. The accompanying unison readings for use in worship are samples of the ways this confession can be used widely in the church. Already 22,500 copies in print.

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Integration tops agenda of associate group meeting

Elkhart, Ind. (MCGB)—Leaders of the four Mennonite Church associate groups discussed their role in the integration with the General Conference Mennonite Church at the first joint meeting of the associate group boards in Milford, Ind., on May 16-18.

The presidents and staff of the African-American Mennonite Association (AAMA), Hispanic Mennonite Council (HMC), United Native Ministries Council (UNMC), and Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC) first met at a one-day meeting in April 1994. This larger, longer session in May allowed participants to experience a new level of trust through sharing of common concerns and worship experiences.

Vern Preheim and Darrel Fast, general secretary and moderator of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC), met with the group to discuss concerns about integration. In contrast to the Mennonite Church, the GCMC has a large number of Asian members, a few Hispanic churches, but only two African-American congregations.

MC and GC contrasts. In the present structure of the Mennonite Church, the associate groups have votes and voices in the General Assembly and on the General Board. GC women, Hispanics, Native Americans, and some Asian groups have their own organizations but do not elect representatives to the General Board, said Preheim. Most of these have a fraternal relationship to the Commission on Home Ministries, and each of the ethnic groups is represented on at least one of the GC boards.

Darrell Fast noted that the GCMC is congregational in polity, not conference-based like the Mennonite Church. Only congregations send delegates to the GC assembly. Associate groups do not send delegates.

Miriam Book, interim general secretary of the Mennonite Church and facilitator of the meeting, reported that the General Board has appointed advisers from the associate groups to participate in the Integration Committee process. This is a "a built-in safety piece," she said. The Integration Committee is "committed to the inclusion of the associate groups in the new denominational structure," according to Book.

Participants agreed that it is appropriate for the groups to now work with their GC counterparts. WMSC and AAMA are already involved in cooperative programs with GC women and African-Americans respectively.

Along with separate reporting, each group took a turn in leading a time of worship. Each of the four times of worship featured a distinct style of preaching and singing.

Leslie Francisco, president of AAMA, preached the story of Nehemiah. "Nehemiah never forgot who he was and where he came from," Francisco said. Like Nehemiah, leaders of the associate groups need to identify the needs of their people, cast a vision, and move beyond obstacles.

'Unity, humility, and love.' Terri Brenneman, past president of WMSC, directed two movement exercises called "We are the body of Christ" that focused on the need of each part of the body for the others. Felipe Cantu of the HMC preached on Ephesians 2 and 4. The Lord is head of all, he reminded the group. "We must be humble and gentle, patient with each other. Church growth will come through our unity, humility, and love for one another."

Don Barnhill, president of UNMC, led the closing worship service. Daniel Smiley, a Navajo preacher, spoke of his recent study of theology in college to prepare for the ministry. As he returns to the reservation, Smiley said that he asks himself, "Am I willing to sacrifice my life for my people?"

Learning to know members of other groups at the meeting was enriching and encouraging, said James Offutt. "I've been blessed out of my socks. This has been tremendous. God has interrupted our agenda."

'Blatting' out illiteracy. *Winnipeg, Man. (MCC Canada)*—Mennonite children in Mexico read *Das Blatt,* a German magazine for children. A large number of children in the conservative Mennonite colonies in Mexico, Belize, Paraguay, and Argentina are functionally illiterate. *Das Blatt,* produced by *Die Mennonitische Post* and supported by Mennonite Central Committee Canada, is "more than a literacy tool," says editor Dorothea Rempel Kampen. "It widens their horizons. It is the only window on the world for a large number of our readers."

Abe Warkentin, editor of *Die Mennonitische Post,* says a longer school year, broader curriculum, and properly trained teachers would improve educational standards in Mennonite colonies. However, he doesn't expect the church leadership to approve these kinds of changes within the near future.

The magazine, published monthly since the fall of 1989 and has 2,050 subscribers, has color pictures and activities such as crossword puzzles, word searches, and Bible quizzes.—*Gladys Terichow*

'Creating a healing family'

Edmonton Mennonites propose new model for families at risk of separation

Edmonton, Alta.—The Alberta government has invited Mennonites in Edmonton to develop a Christian-based support community for families at risk of having their children removed by social services.

Mike Cardinal, until recently the minister of family and social services, issued the invitation in March, noting that "the government makes a poor parent" and needs alternatives to current systems of intervention in abusive families. In May, the ministry granted $36,000 (Cdn.) to a research team to prepare a plan for a 10-year project in one of the high-need neighborhoods of Edmonton.

Cardinal was familiar with Mennonites because of friendships with Mennonite Board of Missions Voluntary Service (VS) workers during his teenage years in Calling Lake, Alta. He gives much credit for his career as the first Aboriginal cabinet minister in Alberta to VS workers who served as mentors to him.

'Coming full circle.' Last year Cardinal brought up his idea for a center that would support parents caring for their children to Ike Glick and Leo Jantzi, both former VS workers in Calling Lake. Glick, together with Dave Hubert, former director of Mennonite Central Committee employment concerns, honed a vision for such a community through discussions with pastors and social service professionals of Edmonton's eight Mennonite churches. "It's like the wheel is coming full circle," says Hubert of Cardinal's suggestion of the program. "He [Cardinal] has said that if it hadn't been for them [Glick and Jantzi], he wouldn't be where he is today."

Spiritual care. In their proposed model, a Christian team of social services staff and VS workers would live in a community and initially serve 15 families. They would model healthy parenting and relationships, facilitate community building, and help parents learn about interpersonal communication, budgeting, nutrition, health, home maintenance, and other life skills. Local service agencies would be used as needed for counseling. The vision also strongly emphasizes that spiritual care would be offered through links to Mennonite churches and the personal witness of the staff.

Cardinal heartily endorsed the initiative at a March meeting with the Mennonite ministerium. Further arrangements for financing and networking with government services followed in April and May. Since May 13, a research team coordinated by Hubert has been busy researching parallel models around the continent, discussing voluntary service recruitment with Mennonite agencies, consulting with social service professionals, and working with staffing structures and policies.

The team includes Irene Baergen, Ike Glick, David Hubert, Melita Rempel-Burkholder, Jim Shantz, Gordon Smith, and David Wilde. They come from General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren, and Mennonite Church congregations.

Despite the recent resignation of Cardinal, the government has reassured the research team that the program will proceed.

Hubert says the goal of the team is to "create a healing family and healing community that provides security and stability for children so they can grow into contributing adults."

—Melita Rempel-Burkholder with Valerie Weaver

The inter-Mennonite research team for the Edmonton families at risk project is (left to right): David Wilde, Irene Baergen, Gordon Smith, Jim Shantz, Melita Rempel-Burkholder, and David Hubert. Not pictured is Ike Glick.

Vision committee calls for church involvement

Newton, Kan. (GCMC-MC)—The *Vision: Healing and Hope* committee members met in Baltimore, Md., June 6-7, to further discuss how they could encourage congregations, area conferences, and churchwide groups to embrace the vision statement adopted by Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church delegates at Wichita '95.

They affirmed the idea of following a specific cycle, which would involve focusing on different sections of the vision statement over a three-year period.

In 1997, for example, the focus would be on the first portion, which states: "To follow Jesus Christ more faithfully, we are called to enrich our prayer, worship, and study of the Scriptures, and offer all that we are and have to God."

The overall theme for 1997 is worship; for 1998, community; and for 1999, mission.

Measurable goals. The members suggested that groups set at least one measurable goal for each of the six priorities listed in the vision statement. They also hope to publish stories about how the vision statement has affected people as well as to develop a resource list.

The *Vision: Healing and Hope* committee is inviting individuals to submit a musical composition that uses the words in the vision statement. Compositions may be submitted to the General Board of the Mennonite Church, 421 S. 2nd St., Suite 600, Elkhart, IN 46516.

'To be enslaved.' *Cotzal, Guatemala (MCC)*—Mennonite Central Committee worker Ruth Anne Friesen (right) visits with Alejandra Funes and her sons on a coffee plantation called Finca San Francisco. Every couple of weeks, Ruth Anne and her husband Richard visit the plantation where hundreds of indigenous Mayan families live and work on 8,340 acres of coffee plantation. Funes has spent her entire life on the plantation and lives with eight other people in a small shack.

"To work on the finca is to be enslaved," says Methodist pastor Diego Chamay Toma who also works with the families. "They must buy on credit and when they receive their pay, they just distribute it out to the shops and are again left with empty hands." The indigenous population was robbed of its land some 50 years ago under the plantation's first European owner. Toma says he sees hope in assisting independent farmers to increase the productivity of their subsistence crops so they are not forced to seek seasonal work at Finca San Francisco.

Choice Books to become self-governing ministry

Harrisonburg, Va. (MBM)—Choice Books, the 34-year-old book distribution ministry of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), will become an independent organization.

MBM's board of directors have approved changing the Choice Books central office and umbrella organization to a limited liability company owned by the Choice Books distributors. The transition will take place in 1997 and becomes effective Jan. 1, 1998.

MBM will not become one of the owners of this new company, but the board agreed to sell the Choice Books trademark to the limited liability company at fair market value. MBM remains open to nonowner relationships and has offered the new company the chance to operate its central office and buy support services from MBM's Harrisonburg office.

"This is a wonderful success story," said Nancy Heisey, an MBM board member from Barto, Pa., regarding the recommendation, which was approved unanimously by the board.

At MBM's encouragement, the Choice Books cooperative groups explored new organizational options to strengthen the operation. The new organization allows Choice Books to grow and adapt to meet market changes and new opportunities, such as servicing giant retailers and chains, according to Kenneth J. Weaver, director of media for MBM.

But some type of ongoing liaison with MBM would provide Choice Books with continuing national and international churchwide credibility. It would also help keep the ministry aspect of Choice Books in place in an increasingly business-driven marketplace, said John Bomberger, director of the central office for Choice Books.

Choice Books maintains an extensive network of volunteers and paid staff who service more than 4,000 locations. It is a cooperative ministry of Beachy Amish, Brethren in Christ, Church of the Brethren, Conservative Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren, and Mennonite Church constituencies.

—*Melodie Davis*

AMBS experiences renewal of prayer

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) is in a renewal of prayer, according to Marlene Kropf, chair of the spiritual life committee and adjunct instructor in spiritual formation and worship.

"There has been a growing interest in spirituality on the campus for the past decade, so the interest in prayer is nothing new," Kropf says. "Now there is a specific interest in communal prayer—it is a more intense interest."

During the past two years, the spiritual life committee began two structures to provide more chances for communal prayer: evening song and prayer and community prayers.

Evening song and prayer. Evening song and prayer services, beginning in September 1994, incorporate the worship elements used at the Taizé community in France. These include Taizé music, Scripture readings in several languages, periods of silence, and intercessory prayer.

"It became the gathering place people didn't want to miss," says Kathy Giesbrecht, AMBS student and member of the spiritual life committee. "Because the format was new for most people, it awoke them to a new way of prayer."

The services are held from 9-10 p.m. The later time became a distinctive of the service, Kropf says. "It is easier for people to be intimate with God at night when we are more reflective."

Community prayers. Building on the response to these services, the spiritual life committee decided to structure additional periods of communal prayer for the 1995-1996 year: biweekly community prayers during the regular chapel time. These services relied on songs from the Iona community in Scotland and intercessory prayer and silence, although student worship leaders brought their own styles to this prayer time.

According to Giesbrecht, the community prayer structure provided yet another way of praying. "The community prayers allowed for individual voices, but the community was hearing those voices. It was a good way for people to pray their concerns for other parts of the world," Giesbrecht says.

The services were "gentle, nonthreatening ways for people to pray with their mouths and their bodies," according to Kropf.—*June Mears Driedger*

MCC executive meets with IMF chief officer

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Ten religious leaders, including Mennonite Central Committee executive director John A. Lapp, told the managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently that poor residents of "severely indebted low-income countries" are shouldering an immorally heavy load for loans incurred by their governments.

Lapp joined representatives of organizations from other faiths—including Quaker, Roman Catholic, United Methodist—and interfaith groups such as Bread for the World for a 1 1/2 hour meeting with Michel Camdessus on June 11 at the IMF headquarters in Washington.

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The Tanzanian government annually spends just over two dollars (U.S.) per person on health. It spends five dollars per person on international loan repayments.

In Honduras public spending on debt represents more than the country gives to health and education combined. These countries are not alone in bearing the burdens of an international economy.

The IMF is increasingly being criticized for the loan conditions called "structural adjustment programs" that are imposed upon borrowing nations. The programs call for severe reductions in governmental spending, which have resulted in huge slashes in social services, including health and education. And while other lending agencies such as the World Bank and regional banks support specific debt reduction measures, the IMF has been dragging its feet.

The IMF and the World Bank were created by the major Western powers in 1944 at a summit in Bretton Woods, N.H. The IMF's mission was to enhance international financial and trade cooperation and to stabilize currency markets.

This first meeting of Camdessus with an ecumenical delegation of U.S. religious leaders was "respectful, very open," Lapp observes. "Camdessus is eager to engage religious organizations in conversation." Another meeting is likely this fall, and Camdessus is open to talking with individual church groups.

While Camdessus wants to hear what the religious community has to say, he also recognizes the IMF needs to "redeem its public image," Lapp comments.

At the meeting, religious leaders talked about faith and what they are hearing from the field as well as about specific policies. Lapp and others told Camdessus that grassroots workers in many countries report school attendance is dropping, health care is deteriorating, and food is scarcer because IMF structural adjustment programs force countries to devalue their currency, increase exports, and decrease imports.

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The religious leaders also emphasized faith concerns. Lapp referred to MCC's statement on debt, which says, "Given that the international debt deprives some people not only of the means to meet their needs but of life itself, the debt cannot be seen as an expression of God's will. The debt is faith issue for those of us who believe in a God of life."

The religious community is also asking for more openness about IMF actions.

The Religious Working Group on the World Bank and the IMF organized the meeting. The MCC Washington Office is a member of this working group, and MCC staff person Martin Shupack helped organize the meeting. He was encouraged by its outcome. "Mr. Camdessus' declaration of wanting to make the poorest people the central concern of the world economy is ground-breaking language for the IMF, whose traditional mandate concerns maintaining global financial stability," Shupack says. "Our hope is that people of faith and other advocates for the poor will hold the IMF accountable to this clear standard."

—Emily Will

Swazi youth leader visits U.S. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Hlobisile Nxumalo (right), a youth leader among Zionist churches in Swaziland, talks with Sherill Hostetter after an April chapel presentation at Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM). Nxumalo, who works with youth camps and seminars for Faith Bible School, expressed appreciation for EMM's partnership which "is helping to spread the word of God among the Zionist churches." Both EMM and Mennonite Central Committee support the work among the independent churches of Swaziland.

Nxumalo said youth are often looked down upon, but Faith Bible School "gives youth a sense of pride about who they are." The school offers five seminars yearly, two of which equip youth for ministry in the churches. Hostetter and her husband, Darrel, served as Bible teachers in Swaziland from 1983-1995.

—J. Allen Brubaker

• **Haiti delegation ends.** An eight-member Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation to Haiti June 8-19 concluded its time with a prayer vigil urging the United States government to turn over captured documents that include the names of people who persecuted and killed more than 5,000 Haitians during the period of military rule. The CPT group also conducted a series of prayer vigils at places in Port-au-Prince where religious leaders, human rights workers, and others had been killed during the military rule.

• **EMU announces new personnel.** Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has announced eight new faculty members beginning in the 1996-97 school year. They are: Jan Butcher, assistant professor of nursing; Joan Griffing, assistant professor of music; Theodore "Ted" Grimsrud, assistant professor of theology and philosophy; Jean Roth Hawk, professor of education; Scott D. Jost, assistant professor of art; Linda Miller, assistant professor of nursing; Boyd Reese, director of libraries; and Ruth-Anne Wideman, assistant professor of physical education. Other special teaching appointments or part-time faculty include: Melvin C. Ching, assistant professor of biology; Ingrid DeSanctis, instructor in theater; Barrett S. Hart, part-time associate in Institute for Conflict Studies and Peacebuilding; Howard Zehr, associate professor of sociology; Delbert Seitz, business department; Trina Stutzman, women's basketball coach; and Kathleen Temple, Bible department.

• **MBM allots money for seminary.** Mennonite Board of Missions will give up to $54,000 to buy land and recruit volunteers to help build a school for systematic Bible training in Cotonou, Benin. The board of directors voted unanimously on June 6 to approve the project that will serve more than 30 African independent churches.

• **Three conferences meet.** Representatives from three conferences of the Mennonite Church and one district of the General Conference Mennonite Church met on June 2 in Leola, Pa., to get acquainted with each other. Some 40 people from Atlantic Coast, Lancaster, and Franconia conferences and the Eastern District shared information about the membership, mission, organization, and cooperative efforts already in place within the respective groups.

• **Mennonite arts journal released.** Free copies of the premiere issue of *Kairos: Arts and Letters from the Mennonite Culture* are still available. The journal includes works of artists and writers from the U.S. and Canada and interviews, essays, and notice of upcoming events. Subscription information is available from Cynthia Yoder, 181 N. Fulton Ave., Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10550.

• **Herald Press books translated.** Herald Press, a division of Mennonite Publishing House, has signed contracts for nine of its recent books to be published by firms in Poland, Brazil, Nigeria, and Germany, according to director Paul M. Schrock. Arrangements have been completed for Polish publication of four biblical novels and Portuguese publication of two books by John M. Drescher. Two Herald Press titles will also be published in Nigeria, and German audiocassette rights were secured for another book in the Sara and Sam mystery series by Ruth Nulton Moore.

• **Nursing alumnae celebrate.** Graduates of LaJunta (Colo.) Mennonite School of Nursing (LMSN) gathered June 14-16 for a reunion at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich. Between 1918-1958, some 420 students graduated from the diploma program, which pioneered nursing education in the Mennonite Church. The 85 alumnae came from 16 states and South Africa for the reunion. Nursing students at the three Mennonite Church colleges are selected annually as recipients of LMSN memorial scholarships.

• **New appointments:**

Vicki Jennings, development associate for partnership and development services department, Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind.

Chris Kauffman, administrative assistant for Asia and Middle East department of global ministries division, Mennonite Board of Missions.

• **Missionary transitions:**

Donna Classen of Springfield, Ohio, will serve two years in Dagestan as an overseas mission associate of Mennonite Board of Missions.

Marcello Mast of Oley, Pa., will serve a two-year Mennonite Board of Missions term at Asunción Christian Academy in Paraguay on July 15.

• **Coming events:**

Retreat for returning missionaries, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Aug. 9-11. More information from 800 839-1021.

MCC Atlanta celebration, Atlanta, Ga., Sept. 20-22. Celebrates more than 30 years of service by Mennonite Central Committee. Featured speaker is Vincent Harding, former director of the Martin Luther King Memorial Center and adviser to the television series "Eyes on the Prize." A brochure with more information will be available after July 15 from Lynn Roth at 717 859-3889.

• **New books:**

A Mennonite Journal, 1862-1865: A Father's Account of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley provides a glimpse into life in a Mennonite home involved in the Confederate cause. The journal, kept by Jacob R. Hildebrand, is edited by his great-grandson, John R. Hildebrand. Available from Burd Street Press, Division of White Mane Publishing Co., 63 West Burd St., Shippensburg, PA 17257.

• **New resources:**

Jubilee Storytelling is a new training video for Sunday school teachers who use the *Jubilee: God's Good News* curriculum. Designed to help teachers enrich their storytelling techniques by watching other teachers and understanding storytelling as worship. Available from Mennonite Publishing House at 800 245-7894.

Cloud of Witnesses: Rediscovering Anabaptism is a video collection of stories of early Anabaptists interwoven with those of contemporary Christians in England. Discusses historical and spiritual roots of an Anabaptist faith, living as communities of believers, and the meaning of faith in a secular society. Available from Mennonite Media Ministries at 800 999 3534.

• **Job openings:**

Academic computing technician, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Responsibilities include micro-computer support for campus computing labs. Qualifications include degree in computer science or related field, PC literacy (hardware and software, Mac, and Windows), and familiarity with World Wide Web and HTML. Contact EMU Human Resources Office at 540 432-4108; E-mail ebybj@emu.edu.

Director of communications, Bluffton (Ohio) College. Responsibilities include building and administering a program of effective communications with various constituencies. Qualifications include master's degree in communications, five years relevant institutional experience, and strong communication and managerial skills. Send letter and résumé by July 15 to Bluffton College, Development Office, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196.

Director of financial assistance, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Responsibilities include managing student financial assistance and representing financial assistance issues in the development of recruitment and retention strategies. Qualifications include masters degree, experience in student services staff supervision, public relations, and administration and office management. Full-time, 12-month position. Application deadline is Aug. 30. More information available from 540 432-4108.

Manager, Selfhelp Crafts, Baltimore, Md. Responsibilities include supervision of staff and financial management. Retail experience desired. Call 410 235-9178.

Mennonite Foundation representative, Hesston, Kan. Qualifications include experience in planned giving, investment principles, and insurance projects. Training in law or accounting preferred. Send letter of interest and résumé to Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Department, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.

Physical education teacher, Belleville (Pa.) Mennonite School. Full-time opening, kindergarten-12th grade. More information and applications are available from superintendent Matt McMullen at 717 935-2184.

NEW MEMBERS

Breslau, Ont.: Emilee Bender, Kristen Gingrich, and Lucas Snider.

Cape Christian Fellowship, Cape Coral, Fla.: Linda Geiser, Denny and Barb Maloney, Bryan, Melodee, J. B., and Sarah Thompson, Bill Drake, Jeff, Alison, and Kacie Free, Rylee, Alexis, and Carmella Corcoran, and Adam Free.

Clinton Frame, Goshen, Ind.: Heidi Gerber.

First, Reedley, Calif.: Alfred Cardona, Theodore Harder, Jacob Harder, Kate Moyer, Elijah Penner, and Michelle Wall.

Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: Ray and Eva Owen and Lisa Gingerich.

Kingview, Scottdale, Pa.: Deborah Scott, Chris Dezort, Addie Hiebert, James Hiebert, Susanna Meyer, Joel Shenk, Karl Stutzman, Mark Peachey, Juanita Boshert, and Valerie Weaver.

Landisville, Pa.: Alejo Abreu, Evelyn Abreu, Jim Edwards, Bryan Herr, Don Nyce, Faye Nyce, Lynn Roth, Nancy Roth, David Yoder, and Pauline Yoder.

Lindale, Edom, Va.: Michael Hershey, Mark Horst, Janelle Leaman, and Emily Mullet.

Lombard, Ill.: Mike McHugh and Joe McHugh.

North Leo, Leo, Ind.: Lucy Freese, Carolyn Leichty, Leonard Leichty, Jean Ridgway, Kathy Ridgway, and Ron Warner.

Peace, Burlington, Iowa: Theresa Jones, Monte Harper, Joshua King, and Dwayne Petterson.

Ridgeview, Gordonville, Pa.: Andrew Dietzel, Joshua Graybill, Andrew Greenwald, David King, Jonathan King, Matthew King, Brandon Kline, Craig Lapp, Dustin Lapp, Rodney Lapp, Jana Petersheim, Clay Smoker, Matthew Steffy, Rodney Stoltzfus, John Thomas, and Travis Ulrich.

Rouge Valley, Markham, Ont.: Linda Petty and Mark Petty.

St. Jacobs, Ont.: Daryl Cressman, Shelley Mayer, Steven Mayer, Ong ath Phounsavath, Pamela Schmitz, and Daniel Snyder.

Thomas, Hollsopple, Pa.: Rebecca Mock, Michelle Orkis, Jodi Alwine, Sarah Pears, Jenilee Speigle, Lacie Thomas, Katie Thomas, Michael Kaufman, Stephen Mock, and Jesse Pears.

Washington Community Fellowship, Washington, D.C.: Virginia Huth, Neena Moorjani, Peter Noble, Lois Graber, Karla Yoder, Kelly Van Zomeren, and Diana and Marty Shupack.

Yoder, Haven, Kan.: Lloyd and Jean Mace.

BIRTHS

Belton, Rhonda Deal and Raymond, Chesapeake, Va., Brett Joseph (second child), June 11.

Byler, Michelle Moyer and Matthew, Belleville, Pa., Tori Michelle (second child), Sept. 25, 1995.

Esch, Tanya Ramsey and Dwaine, Belleville, Pa., Amber Nicole (first child), Feb. 20.

Hess, Starla Sensenig and David, Lancaster, Pa., Katie Jo (second child), May 26.

Kolb, Rachel and Stacey, Pennsburg, Pa., Sarah Janelle (second child), June 6.

Martin, Donna Atcitty and Ronald, Bloomfield, N.M., Alayna Kelly-Ann (second child), April 27.

Miller, Laurie Yoder and Keith, Chesapeake, Va., Troy Edward (second child), June 4.

Paddock, Bonny Potiuk and Cory, Duchess, Alta., Chandra Lynne (second child), May 29.

Smucker, Faith King and Jeff, Bird-in-Hand, Pa., Marchelle Renee (second child), May 18.

Snyder, Kim Shaffer and Dean, Sarasota, Fla., Bryce Alan (first child), May 25.

Stauffer, Marcia Zeiset and Duane, Mount Joy, Pa., Adrian Nicole (first child), May 31.

Weaver, Rose Schlabach and Gerald, Sherwood, Mich., Benjamin Mode (first child), April 27.

Wible, Carol Burckhart and Kevin, East Greenville, Pa., Kara Ann (second child), June 10.

Yoder, Jan Lehman and Damon, West Chicago, Ill., Spencer Ryan (second child), May 24.

MARRIAGES

Albrecht-Vincent: Cameron Albrecht, Tiskilwa, Ill. (Willow Springs), and Mandy Vincent, Ohio, Ill. (United Methodist), April 13, by Ron Eckberg.

Barr-Geissinger: Robert Barr, Lansdale, Pa. (Towamencin), and Crystal Geissinger, Harleysville, Pa. (Towamencin), June 8, by Steven C. Nyce.

Berkey-Showalter: Laura Berkey, Dayton, Va. (Harrisonburg), and Chris Showalter, Dayton, Va. (Harrisonburg), May 25, by Steve Yoder.

Gingerich-Nafziger: Charlene Gingerich, New Hamburg, Ont. (Steinmann), and Darryn Nafziger, New Hamburg, Ont. (Hillcrest), June 8, by Herb Schultz and Maurice Martin.

Jones-Schweck: Barbara Jones, Pottstown, Pa. (Boyertown), and Michael Schweck, Gilbertsville, Pa. (Boyertown), May 25, by Alvin Detweiler.

Leatherman-Markley: Julie Leatherman, Ottsville, Pa. (Deep Run East), and Christian Markley, Telford, Pa., May 25, by David Markey Jr. and Tim Weaver.

Lyndaker-Steckly: Roxanne Lyndaker, Croghan, N.Y. (Croghan), and Mark Steckly, Croghan, N.Y. (Naumburg), June 1, by Dan Tabolt.

Miller-Yoder: Sherlin Miller, Goshen, Ind., and Janelle Yoder, Middlebury, Ind. (First), May 18, by Eugene Bontrager.

DEATHS

Bowens, Maria Lautzenheiser, 32, Goshen, Ind. Born: April 28, 1964, Stark County, Ohio, to Warren and Elda Horst Lautzenheiser. Died: May 18, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Homicide. Survivors—husband: James Bowens; children: Joey Arnold, Jesse; brother: Mark Lautzenheiser. Congregational membership: Martins Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 22, Rieth-Rohrer-Ehret Funeral Home, by Randy Murray and Sheldon Swartz. Burial: Elkhart Prairie Cemetery.

Breneman, Ruth Witmer, 71, Lancaster, Pa. Born: Nov. 3, 1924, Manor Twp., Pa., to Christian and Lizzie Witmer Breneman. Died: June 4, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—brothers and sister: Paul, Roy, Eli, Clifford, Grace Nolt. Funeral: June 8, Mennonite Home, by J. Wilmer Eby and Aaron H. Souders. Burial: Masonville Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Brunk, Alicia Faye, 6 days, Souderton, Pa. Born: May 29, 1996, Abington, Pa., to Don and Deb Brunk. Died: June 5, 1996, Philadelphia, Pa. Survivors—parents; brother: Caleb Rusterholtz. Graveside service and burial: June 8, Souderton Mennonite Church Cemetery, by David Greiser.

Ernst, Myrta Myrle Beckler, 76, Albany, Ore. Born: Feb. 28, 1920, Woodriver, Neb., to Enos and Mary Schweitzer Beckler. Died: June 5, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—children: Gary, Kenneth, Joan Kuhns, Donna Maurer, Charlotte Tracy, Shelley Ernst; sister: Roberta Ernst; 8 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Chester Ernst (husband). Funeral: June 8, Bethany Mennonite Church, by John Willems. Burial: Fairview Mennonite Cemetery.

Harder, Robert J., 74, Reedley, Calif. Born: Jan. 29, 1922, to Abram and Justina Quiring Harder. Died: June 2, 1996, New York, of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Ethel Klassen Harder; children: Janet Parker, Jean Flores, James, Joseph; brother and sister: Harry, Martha Houk; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: June 7, First Mennonite Church, by Kenneth L. Seitz. Burial: Reedley Cemetery.

Honsberger, Arminta Snyder, 93, Cambridge, Ont. Born: Sept. 16, 1902, New Hamburg, Ont., to Zenas and Lavina Cressman Snyder. Died: June 8, 1996, Cambridge, Ont. Survivors—husband: Ralph Honsberger; children: Vernon, Dorothy Snyder, Marjorie Jackson, Lewis, Lloyd, Eva Good; stepchildren: Charlotte Romagnoli, Hugh Honsberger, Joan Jahnche, Margaret Chester; 24 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Abner Brubacher (first husband). Congregational membership: First Mennonite Church. Funeral: June 13, Fairview Mennonite Home, by Amzie Brubacher andKevin Block. Burial: Vineland Cemetery.

Jantzi, Lyle D., 68, Wood River, Neb. Born: March 9, 1928, Wood River, Neb., to Ezra and Beulah Stutzman Jantzi. Died: May 22, 1996, Grand Island, Neb. Survivors—wife: Fern Jantzi; children: Doyle, Pat Wetzel, Lynelle Drudge, Rhonda Longenecker, Jodie Soto; stepchildren: Rod, Gary, Darin, Roxanne Schlegel, Christine Kraus; brother and sister: Gerald, Donna Saltz-

Leadership seminar held. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Twenty-six workers participated in a leadership seminar held at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters May 27-June 7. Twenty are beginning or continuing overseas assignments; six are beginning or continuing North American assignments.

Each year about 300 people enter MCC assignments in more than 50 countries. Currently about 900 MCC workers serve in assignments such as community development, education, health, food production, emergency response, and administration.

Pictured below are those who attended the June seminar and are affiliated with the Mennonite Church.

Front row (on ground, left to right): (Eva Yoder, Elisabeth Yoder)
Second row (seated): Sara King and Marlin Yoder, country co-representatives in Cuernavaca, Mexico; Delbert Wenger and Andrea Wenger (Eliott Wenger), program coordinators in Whitesburg, Ky.
Third row: Christine Wenger, country co-representative in Maputo, Mozambique; Janet Weber, staff associate for Community Ministries of MCC U.S. in Akron, Pa.; Sally Jacober, program coordinator in New Orleans, La.; Cheryl Hochstetler Shirk, country co-representative in Russia.
Fourth row: Lawrence Rupley and Melody Rupley, country co-representatives and MCC West Africa regional coordinators in Nigeria; Harold Wenger, country co-representative in Maputo, Mozambique; Fern Gerber and David Gerber, country co-representatives in Calcutta, India; Ann Campbell-Janz and Bruce Campbell-Janz, country co-representatives in Zaire; Steve Hochstetler Shirk, country co-representative in Russia.

man; 13 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren, 6 step-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jean Nofziger Jantzi (first wife). Funeral and burial: May 25, Wood River Mennonite Church, by Denton R. Jantzi.

Longacre, Paul E., 91, Barto, Pa. Born: Dec. 30, 1904, Barto, Pa., to John S. and Anna Eshbach Longacre. Died: May 10, 1996, Honey Brook, Pa. Survivors—children: Rhoda King, David, Mark, Aaron, Paul M., Anna Mary Brubacher, James C.; brother: Daniel; 27 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Edna Mowere Longacre (wife). Funeral and burial: May 14, Bally Mennonite Church, by Roy K. Yoder and Elmer G. Kolb.

Martin, Otho E. "Bud," 85. Born: June 11, 1910, Sylvia, Kan., to Guy E. and Blanche Helm Martin. Died: May 20, 1996, Hutchinson, Kan. Survivors—wife: Evelyn A. Ball Martin; son: Richard; brother and sister: Frank, Bonnie Hostetler; 7 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Larry Martin (son). Funeral: May 22, South Hutchinson Mennonite Church, by Howard Wagler and Kenneth W. Ball. Burial: Sylvia Cemetery.

Miller, Opal L., 80, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Aug. 30, 1915, Milford, Neb., to William H. and Melinda Miller Kremer. Died: June 12, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—husband: Wilbur J. Miller; daughter: Joyce Birky; sisters: Ora Bender, Margaret Roth; 3 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Sherrill (daughter). Funeral: June 15, Kalona Mennonite Church, by Scott Swartzendruber and Mick Murray. Burial: Lower Deer Creek Cemetery.

Roth, Laura Sauder, 91, Archbold, Ohio. Born: March 22, 1905, Archbold, Ohio, to Samuel and Katie Nofziger Sauder. Died: June 3, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivors—children: James A., Becky Collins; brother and sisters: Melvin Sauder, Viola Aeschliman, Carrie Miller; 3 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Walter D. Roth (husband). Funeral: June 6, Zion Mennonite Church, by Charles Gautsche. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Shank, Hensel Aaron, 68, Dayton, Va. Born: April 12, 1928, Dayton, Va., to Amos K. and Mary Beery Shank. Died: June 2, 1996, Dayton, Va., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Mardell Carper Shank; children: Norwood, Elvin, Ray, Keith, Eva Heatwole; brothers and sisters: Warren, Nelson, Ruth Knicely, Alma Shank, Grace Rohrer; 14 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 4, Dayton Mennonite Church, by Nate Yoder, Herman Reitz, James Rhodes, and Lewis Martin.

Sharp, Clark Elester, 96, Vestaburg, Mich. Born: June 8, 1899, to William A. and Mary Jane Fankhauser Sharp. Died: March 30, 1996, Port Charlotte, Fla., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Virginia Bontrager Sharp; sister: Agnes Glowacki. Congregational membership: Bethel Mennonite Church. Funeral: April 4, Ferris Center Church of Christ, by Joe Pendleton. Burial: Richland Township Cemetery.

Shearburn, Jeanne M. McClenaghen, 49, Sellersville, Pa. Born: Sept. 7, 1946, Philadelphia, Pa., to Herbert E. and Ruth Fegley McClenaghen. Died: June 3, 1996, Allentown, Pa., of injuries from an automobile accident. Survivors—children: Janine A., Erin Colleen; sister: Lois M. Schwartz. Funeral: June 7, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by David A. Stevens and Truman H. Brunk. Burial: Arlington Cemetery.

Umphress, Steven Lee, 51, Varna, Ill. Born: June 11, 1944, Spring Valley, Ill., to Fayne and Phoebe Madden Umphress. Died: May 31, 1996, Fulton City, Ill., in a plane crash. Survivors—wife: Nancy Meador Girard Umphress; sister: Joyce Dietsch; one grandchild. Predeceased by: Joan Beer Umphress (first wife) and John David (son). Congregational membership: Roanoke Mennonite Church. Funeral: June 4, Funeral Chapel, by Elmer Wyse. Burial: Henry (Ill.) Cemetery.

Wyse, Cora E. Nofziger, 86, Archbold, Ohio. Born: June 28, 1909, Archbold, Ohio, to William and Elizabeth Stuckey Nofziger. Died: June 7, 1996, Bryan, Ohio. Survivors—children: Rosemary Wyse Reimer, Buetta Bontrager, Byrdalene Horst, Norma, Sara Wyse-Wenger, Dean, Denton, Sanford, Allen, Ned; brothers: Dennis, Dale; 25 grandchildren, one great-grandchild, 3 step-grandchildren, one step-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Harold J. Wyse (husband). Funeral and burial: June 10, Lockport Mennonite Church, by Walter Stuckey, Dale Nofziger, and Allen Rutter.

Yoder, Anna E., 81, Chesapeake, Va. Born: Grantsville, Md., to Ezra and Savilla Beachy Yoder. Died: June 3, 1996, Chesapeake, Va. Survivors—husband: Menno Yoder; children: Dorothy Yoder Brangan, Clifford W., Willie J., Leon D., James W., Morris W.; brothers and sisters: Christian, Elsie Schrock, Frieda, Pauline Schrock, Floyd, Cloyd, Elizabeth; 8 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 6, Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church, by Harold Bergey, Simon Schrock, and Merlin L. Miller.

Newspaper

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THE LAST WORD

What's in a border? (2)

Last week, I dared to wade into a subject I might well have stayed out of: U.S.-Canadian relations in the new merged Mennonite church. Yet, if MC-GC integration is going to work, it must deal with the "tough issue" of the 49th parallel.

The Canadian solution for a new church that deals with integrity with both Canadian and U.S. concerns would be for U.S. Mennonites to form an entity similar to the Canadian Mennonite Conference (CMC). This entity would take care of "U.S. agenda": speaking to government, Mennonite Mutual Aid concerns, and other business that is strictly U.S.

This is the solution a "periodicals committee" came up with at a recent meeting to brainstorm what a new denominational publication might look like. After spending close to three-quarters of our time talking about the U.S. and Canadian "scenes," the group agreed to recommend two new publications: one to serve the Canadian constituency, another for the U.S. side of the border. There's hope that as much as 25 percent of the content would be similar in order to maintain connections.

What would be the role of a broad, continent-wide entity if the church structured itself along country lines? Mostly fellowship and inspiration, say the Canadians. There might be some common work: seminary education and ministerial leadership. But most of the rest would be done separately in the two countries.

This is not a solution favored by many U.S. Mennonites. Aside from seeing this as creating an additional layer of structure, they ask: what would a U.S. entity do? (That in itself is an illustration to Canadians that their U.S. counterparts still don't understand.) On the U.S. side, we tend to think the future should have one denominational structure to which districts and area conferences relate directly.

In other words, each of us on both sides of the border want what we now have. We like the way we've been doing things. Why not continue them into the future?

But if we are really serious about the integration that God's Spirit led us to adopt at Wichita '95, all of us on both sides of the border are going to have to face change. We're going to have to give some and take some.

With any change comes pain. But this pain can develop into anticipation if we are willing to look beyond what's now to what might be. It can become adventure if we take the time to develop a new vision for what our church might become. To do that, we should ask ourselves these questions:

- Do we believe it important to have a North American Mennonite identity? Or are national identities the way for the future?
- Whichever identity we choose, how are we going to deal with those needs that will get buried under our new structures? Will we ignore them? Or will we find new ways to address them?
- How is God's Spirit asking Mennonites to structure themselves for the next century? What kind of organization will help us meet our true goal: to share the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ to a dying world?

As one who lives south of the border, I still hold out my vote for a North America-wide Mennonite church in the future. I realize it will make the work of integration much more difficult. And the structure we come up with may be even more complex than those we are leaving behind—opening us up to the charge that integration is, after all, about nothing more than rearranging the furniture.

To help us realize a continent-wide denomination, we in the U.S., used to having our way without much question, will need to listen more intently to our Canadian sisters and brothers. In fact, we may need to bend over backwards to make up for our failures to do so in the past.

It could be they'll tell us there is no other way than to organize into two national church bodies. I hope not. For if the 49th parallel is to become all-important as we structure ourselves for the next century, can we speak with any authenticity about the borders that continue to divide so much of our world?

Within the last several years, Mennonites have become known for their work in reconciliation and mediation. Can we apply these principles to ourselves as we work at our structures for the future? My prayer is that we can—and will.

The integration we voted for at Wichita '95 must take into account the 49th parallel. May we not stumble over it.—*jlp*

July 9, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

"Every look at my six-year-old daughter sent a desperate demand for life searing through my soul, twirling my stomach, and cramping the muscles of my back and shoulders. Knowing I didn't want to die or live with that inner roar, I was miraculously given the grace to choose a treatment plan for my life."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Larry Augsburger:
Learning about God from imperfect models 6

Mental health workers discuss dealing with victims of trauma 9

The Giving Project drafts statement of beliefs about money . . 10

How my God met me (11):

More real than my own body

Breast cancer—it shattered my world with the reality that my body is not totally trustworthy. But I'm also being met and held by a God whose love is.

by Sandra Drescher-Lehman

"How my God met me? What an easy article to write," I thought. "Of course I'd be glad to share the answer to that with *Gospel Herald* readers."

My mind leaped back 10 years and easily captured the feelings of a wonder-filled week in Maryland. It was a week of silence, designed as a spiritual retreat, in which God's love exploded all over me. Through the rituals of worship, music, walks in the woods, listening to water falling over rocks, Scripture, journaling, praying, receiving the prayers of others, fasting, and recounting my thanksgiving, God's love became more real to me than my own body. The words I had memorized as a child about God's love blossomed inside my soul with vigor and beauty.

But before my fingers could even get to the computer, my world shattered into a new reality—breast cancer. I was instantly engulfed in a strange world I didn't want to know about. I whirled through the motions, not ever sure I had consented, but too scared not to: tests,

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I haven't managed to feel thankful for the cancer itself, but I've met a lot of wonderful people because of it. And I've received a lot of love as a result.

surgeries, opinions, more and more opinions, needles, powerful medicines, therapies and alternative therapies, hats, and a wig. Participation felt like a nondecision if I wanted to live—and living was one of the alternatives I didn't care to debate.

My theology assures me that death is not the worst thing to fear and, in fact, will be a wonderful door to go through eventually; but "eventually" was the key word! Every look at my three-year-old son and six-year-old daughter sent a desperate demand for life searing through my soul, twirling my stomach, and cramping my back and shoulder muscles. Knowing I didn't want to die or live with that inner roar, I was miraculously given the grace to choose a treatment plan for my life, whether or not there are any cancer cells left in my body after surgery.

Some of the therapies I've chosen to utilize on this quest for a full life aren't so different those used by from anyone without cancer who wants to live life fully. To the dismay of some, we chose to let the medical people give me the chemotherapy and radiation therapies they have found helpful. From there on, however, and to combat the side effects of the cure, I'm in charge. (At least I still like to maintain an illusion of control, as has become my custom.)

These are some of the therapies I've found very healing in this process.

Prayer. The "side effects" of my own prayers as well as the many prayers of others have been wonderful. I have felt lifted up beyond my energies and held in the lap of God, even when I have no words to offer. Prayer has improved the quality of my life many times in the past, and I need it again now.

Current scientific studies that are being done on prayer say that prayer "works," although not always. What they must mean is that prayer is not a magical 100 percent cure, but I know that prayer always works. Prayer is the gift I've already been given to assist me in living in the presence of God. Prayer is to listen and be heard by God, and I have experienced deep healing from this therapy. God meets me in prayer.

Journaling. When my head is spinning and full of fear and confusion, the most helpful, tangible thing I can do is let my feelings and thoughts and questions out through writing—preferably while curled up in my favorite chair with a mug of hot tea and the phone off the hook. When my reactions toward my children are more irritated than patient, I know the most loving way for me to be their mother is to go be alone with my journal. It helps me to admit the present and plan for the future. It helps me to find serenity and courage and thus not add to the chaos discovered in my body. God meets me at the tip of my pen.

Support groups. I've never experienced a more powerful reminder of my supportive community than when I let my friends and family know about my cancer diagnosis. I have gotten to enjoy the flowers most people receive only at their funerals. Our family has received so many gifts of meals, entertainment, childcare, creative headgear, and books—so many that the money it's saving us exceeds our medical bills. That's what I call being saturated in community!

My family, church, co-workers, and friends who have expressed their love have been joined by my new support groups of others with cancer. With one in eight North American women receiving the diagnosis of breast cancer, this is a bigger community than I would have known about if I hadn't joined it.

The extrovert that I normally am increasingly feels a need to go inside and be alone with all this disease has brought to me. At these times I especially appreciate my support community who understands that need and continues to care for me silently. Studies have also shown that those who are involved in support groups live longer. God is meeting me with life through these people.

Listening to tapes and directing my thoughts to God's healing power. These have been part of this journey as well—especially when I feel too sick and weak to use my own energy. John, my husband, made a tape for me with ocean waves crashing in the background. It's a concrete reminder of God's constant love that keeps sweeping in to heal me and to take the pain and fear and cancer cells out. Recording his own voice on top of the surf, he has also inserted intermittent reminders of my strength and my need to be gentle with myself, to relax, to breathe deeply, and to let the prayers of many wash through me. My body and mind and soul seem inextricably bound, and God meets me in their intermingling.

To add concreteness to the imagery of healing water, John and some friends also built a fishpond with running water in our back yard. It

helped to replace the feeling that our home had become a "cancer house" where I didn't want to be anymore and turned it into a place of calmness and healing. I easily meet God in the gurgle and life of the water.

Exercise. As I learn all the new ways to take care of this body that's fragile and amazingly strong at the same time, I feel a desire to exercise. It's not to lose weight this time or even to strengthen my muscles. It is to celebrate the fact that my body can do it! Soon after my diagnosis, Maria said, "Mom, there's worse things than having cancer you know. Both your legs could have fallen off." And she's absolutely right.

The author, Sandra Drescher-Lehman, with her children, Jonathan and Maria.

Gratitude. Gratitude is an element of life that sometimes flows quite easily and sometimes needs some urging; either way, the results are worth seeking. I can't think of many situations that are helped more by grumbling than by being thankful.

I haven't managed to feel thankful for cancer itself, but I've met a lot of wonderful people because of it. I've received a lot of love as a result of it. I've known God's watchful presence through it. Cancer is definitely an inconvenience to my normal pace and plans, but life is also full of goodness. I can remember that best when I maintain the gratitude therapy. When I ask God to meet me with reminders of what I have to be thankful for, there is never silence.

Fun and laughter. I thank God for being real to me especially through my children. They forgive my irritability, hug me when I'm sad, demand that I join them in living, and help me laugh at how ugly I look without hair!

Last week three-year-old Jonathan took off my hat so he could rub my head. He had a puzzled look on his face, so I said, "I look funny, don't I?" He said, "Yeah, but you're still Mommy, right? And you're still Sandy, right?" He just needed a bit of reassurance and was immediately back into his play.

Our family decided that we gave up enough for Lent this year, so we added something instead—Weekly Fun Dates. We've gone to the circus, the zoo, parks, playgrounds, movies with popcorn, plays, the beach, Grandpa and Grandma's house, the cousins' house, and McDonalds. Maybe it was an attempt to rush Easter. Or maybe it was just an attempt to remember that we're all alive so we may as well live as fully as possible. At any rate, laughing makes more things more fun. It sure helped to laugh as I put on my first Easter hat ever! Maybe our children will remember the year Mom had cancer as the most fun time of their childhood.

As I outline the therapies I'm currently using and acknowledge others—such as Scripture reading, worship, music, and eating healthy—I realize again that they are not unique to my experience with cancer. Many persons utilize these same therapies in their spiritual journeys. They are similar to the ones I was exercising 10 years ago when the knowledge of God's love collided with feeling it. And I won't be surprised if they're the ones I'm using as I watch my grandchildren grow up.

Now I know why God's love has come to me as more real than my own body. It's because my body is not totally trustworthy. It's fallible. I'm glad I'm being met and held by Someone who isn't.

Sandra Drescher-Lehman is a social worker and writer and member of First Mennonite Church in Richmond, Va. She is married to John and they have two children, Maria and Jonathan.

"Rejoice greatly. . . . Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. . . . and he shall command peace to the nations."—Zech. 9:9, 10b

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

In ***Conflict Can Be God's Call for Spiritual Growth*** (May 14), Don Blosser states that of the four requirements for Gentiles listed in Acts 15, "we who are Gentiles observe only one of them."

The four requirements are: (1) do not eat meat sacrificed to idols; (2) do not eat blood; (3) do not eat meat from strangled animals; (4) abstain from sexual immorality.

I observe all these requirements. To my knowledge so do the vast majority of all Gentile believers throughout the world. Which, then, is the *one* to which Blosser refers?

Please take a little more time to study when using the Scripture to prove a point. Could it be that Gentiles are asked to observe these things, not to be sensitive to Jewish people, but because they are manifestations of a saving relationship with a holy God that should not be compromised for first-century versions of cultural fads and political correctness?

Lowell Stoltzfus
Minneapolis, Minn.

Human nature seems to require pictures or images in order to understand invisible truths and statements. Jesus understood this and used many descriptive word pictures in his teachings about the kingdom of God.

God's people have come far from Aaron's golden calf to various types of symbols used throughout history. The Anabaptists rejected the statues of the Roman church.

In our need to understand and accept the merging of many peoples, races, and languages which God wants to bring into the church, I am glad you help us when you use images like the faceless, unidentified blank silhouettes, such as the one on the cover of the May 14 issue. I pray you will continue to teach us and lead us.

Chester C. Osborne
Hesston, Kan.

Unless there has been a recent modification of the paradigm, the verb "breathe" is spelled thus, with the final "e" signaling raising of the central vowel and voicing of the final fricative.

Please refer to the first sentence of the introduction of the article, ***When to Build Fences and When to Open the Gates*** (May 28). What you've got there is a noun, sans raised vowel and voiced fricative. Oy.

Tiffany Beechy
Salem, Ore.

When to Build Fences and When to Open the Gates (May 28). I read with appreciation and much thoughtfulness this article by Ruth Detweiler Lesher. I note her thinking on the bishop era and wonder how the bishops can teach and believe that way.

As I see it, when I became a member of the Mennonite Church at age 15, I was given teaching by the bishop from the Bible. I am persuaded that bishops still get their fences from what they understand to be biblical teaching. Why not ask some bishop (there are still a lot of them around) if I have come to a correct conclusion? You may well find talking to a bishop to be time well spent.

Gladys Kennel
Parkesburg, Pa.

Like J. Robert Charles in his "Perspective," ***Some Second Thoughts About Nationalism*** (June 11), I too am troubled when citizens of countries like the United States impose their views on other nations in the name of internationalism.

Part of the reason U.S. citizens are less likely to separate national concerns from international ones is that we have no one-word term to describe ourselves exclusively. "Canadians" and "Mexicans" can be found in dictionaries, but "USans" cannot. We refer to ourselves as "Americans," yet don't usually distinguish between the instances in which we use the term to refer to all inhabitants of the Americas and the much more frequent occasions when we refer to the residents of this country.

To me it seems terribly egocentric for us as a nation to describe ourselves with a word that has such a broad definition. True, "Americans" has become internationally recognized to refer specifically to U.S. citizens. But that shouldn't give us license to blur the distinction between national and international interests.

I would urge "USans" to remember during the MC-GC merger process that

U.S. and Canadian Mennonites will not always see things from the same perspective. We need to beware of assuming that our viewpoint applies to all North American Mennonites.

Anita Mast
Newton, Kan.

I commend J. Robert Charles' ***Some Second Thoughts About Nationalism*** (June 11). His observations are important to bear in mind during the ongoing GC-MC integration discussions.

One important symbol of a truly binational church would be lodging the administrative offices of a major binational board (missions?) in Canada—not just a regional "centre." Or what about Windsor, Ont., for the offices of the denomination's general board? With 25 percent of the integrated denomination in Canada, such a symbol is appropriate.

Sam Steiner
Waterloo, Ont.

Why is Scott Holland such a legalist against legalism? As I apply my own hermeneutic of suspicion to his June 11 letter in "Readers Say," I find revealed in his last sentence a great concern that is also my ultimate concern: we must not conceal from ourselves that we are "sinners desperately needing God's grace."

Only I would say that differently. We sinners are not needy. We all receive God's grace. God does not and will not run out of time for sinners.

Perhaps Holland is so uptight about an uptight church because he fears such a church could and would limit the grace of God. But since I believe in a triumphant God who has already forgiven and given everything to sinners (all of us), I am not worried that some of us sinners have to do church the way Holland wants us to do church.

Of course, I don't know what makes Holland such a legalist against legalism. I know that I am a nonethnic Mennonite attracted to Anabaptist ideology. I am fully aware how dispassionate Mennonites can be about that ideology. But the memory of "legalistic" martyrdom is at least still part of our identity.

Mark McCulley
Ephrata, Pa.

Each time I read about "Mennonite distinctives," such as in ***Whose Name Do We Claim?*** (June 18), I find myself distracted by the unpleasant sounds of grammatically incorrect construction.

The word "distinctive" is an adjective, not a noun. Wouldn't "distinction" or "distinctiveness" (depending on the intended meaning) work just as well—and be more correct?

This reminds me of the way our college admissions departments refer to prospective students as "prospectives" when just plain "prospects" says the same thing and does so with better grammar.

Phil Osborne
Elkhart, Ind.

The discussion in *Gospel Herald* in recent weeks concerning requirements for membership in a Mennonite church reminds me of a story I have heard Quakers tell.

It is said that when William Penn was converted and joined the Society of Friends, he asked George Fox, "How long can I continue to wear my sword?"

Fox answered, "Wear it as long as thee can, William." Moral: trust the "inner light," the Holy Spirit!

Elaine Sommers Rich
Bluffton, Ohio

While no war now rages that demands our sons, people of conscience in the United States are nevertheless forced into the morally unconscionable position of underwriting the continued, unchecked growth of the largest military industrial machine in history.

Mennonites have a proud and painful history of refusing to compromise on the issue of military conscription. But given that war revenues from Mennonites are enough to at least support the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, we cannot at the same time be called uncompromising pacifists. Perhaps the state department concedes CO status to Mennonites because we still by and large hire the soldiers that fire the bullets.

If Mennonites are unable to take responsibility for the use to which the state allocates revenues forcibly taken from them, then Mennonite understandings of separation of church and state must expand to organized refusal to cooperate in paying war taxes.

Every Mennonite congregation should send two or three letters to their U.S. Senators voicing their concern and asking that the Peace Tax Fund bill be adopted. This bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide that a taxpayer conscientiously opposed to war have tax monies spent for nonmilitary purposes. That's the first step.

Perry Keidel
Archer, Fla.

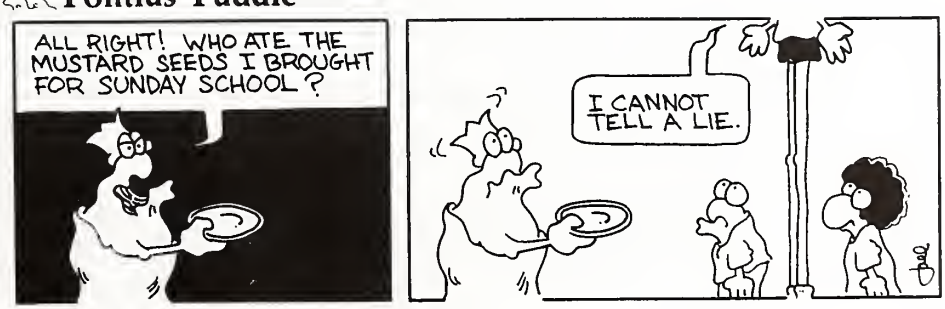
Thanks to Alan Kauffman for sharing his understandings in ***What Carol Smith Taught Me About the Holy Kiss*** (June 4). Like him, I also feel the need to be able to let people know how much they matter!

Thus I need to reach out to the family of Alicia Showalter Reynolds, whose story I've followed in *Gospel Herald*. Surely this tragedy is another "lesson worth living"—teaching us that the relationships we cherish are not guaranteed another tomorrow.

I want Alicia's family to know that I have sobbed and grieved and prayed through this. Haven't we all? I hope our church rises up to bless this family by expressing our grief and, when possible, by offering a holy kiss.

Lydia Samatar
South Orange N. J.

Pontius' Puddle



Mothers, moss roses, and pain:

Learning about God from

Most children develop their concepts of God from their parents. That's relatively easy if they've known love, more difficult if they've memories of serious 'blow its.'

by Larry Augsburger

There is a special place in my heart for moss roses—the simple, colorful flowers that one finds in many lowly flower beds. The exact moment that moss roses were planted in my heart was in the summer of 1951. As I headed out the door with my mind full of an active preschooler's agenda, I was mesmerized by my mother's bed of moss roses. Something about the morning sun on that colorful bed made me stop and thrill over it, and I never see a moss rose without remembering that summer morning with its attendant sensations of sunshine, warmth, security, and home.

Moss roses are not the only thing my mother unconsciously planted in my heart. Although she didn't know it, she and my father were planting a concept of God. Even though I didn't know I was doing it, and I'm sure they didn't know it either, I was drawing conclusions about God by observing them. To my three- or four-year-old eyes, they knew everything (omniscience). They had total power over me (omnipotence). They met all my needs—feeding me, clothing me, offering me security (all-sufficiency). I was totally enveloped in their love and care. This, either fortunately or unfortunately, is how most children develop their concepts of God. Those who have been totally enveloped by their parents' love find it fairly easy to understand God's love. Those who experienced wise and careful discipline find it fairly easy to understand God's discipline.

But despite how we perceived our parents when we were three years old, they weren't God. There were times that they fell short of modeling God's love—when they blew it. Some blew it in little ways, others blew it in big ways. One of the tasks of adulthood is to deal with the memories of the "blow its."

For many of us, dealing with these "blow its" is easy because they were such a small part of who our parents were, and we can easily forget and forgive. But for some of us, the "blow its" overshadow the positives. This is true for people in varying degrees, from very minor to excruciating in nature. It results in varying degrees of stress, woundedness, and emotional pain. We do an injustice to people struggling with high degrees of pain if we ignore their experience or act like it doesn't matter.

When observing Mother's and Father's Days each year, a wide spectrum of people find themselves struggling with how to adequately celebrate (or get through) the day. Some struggle to find an adequate way to express the depth of their love and positive emotion. Others struggle to balance the good and the "blow its." Still others struggle with the pain of too many "blow its." As we celebrate these holidays, we need to do two things.

We need to deal with our memories. For many of us, that means celebrating an unbroken stream of good memories. We think of total love and acceptance. Frequently these memories and the characteristics of mothers are idealized and almost deified as people struggle to find ways of expressing their feelings about the "moss roses moments" of their childhoods.

The most outstanding example of deifying mothers I can think of is a song I heard on a gospel radio station. The soloist put it this way: "God put the miracle in the touch of mother's hand." In his attempt to express his inexpressible feelings about tender and precious moments with his mother, he had turned her into a saint whose mere touch conveyed miracles. Such exaggeration is understandable in light of the strain some feel to give expression to their very positive feelings about their mothers.

Probably even those with a fairly high degree of "blow its" can find some good memories to celebrate. It is good to reflect on them and put the "blow its" in perspective of those good moments. Someone recently told me that a friend, struggling with this exact issue, concluded that if she received nothing else from her parents, she had received life itself. Despite the "blow its" she experienced growing up, she had fashioned a successful and happy life for herself. She placed the mistakes of her parents in the context of the life she had managed to create for herself.

The second part of dealing with memories,

imperfect models

after reviewing and celebrating the good, is acknowledging the "blow its." This is not a traditional Mother's or Father's Day activity, but it is a healthy and necessary one. It helps us keep the reality of life in perspective. There wasn't a miracle in every touch of mother's hand, and parents are very aware of those times when anything but a miracle was conveyed by the touch of their hands. Acknowledging the "blow its" is most helpful for those of us who struggle with being parents and who realize the painful distance between the supposed perfection of those who went before and the struggles that we have.

Many of us have no problem acknowledging the "blow its" and releasing them because they are insignificant in the context of the good. But it is helpful to acknowledge that they are there. They console us that just as we have survived despite our parents' mistakes, our children likely will make it despite ours.

For some, the degree of the "blow its" is greater than the degree of the positive elements of growing up. Memories for them bring not celebration but pain. They deal with their memories not by celebrating but by seeking healing. Once again, this is not a usual Mother's or Father's Day thought, but it is a critical one for those suffering pain.

We need to look at the model of ideal love as we deal with a variety of experiences among us. This is especially important for those struggling with the pain of too many "blow its." It is usually easy to love those who have had lots of good "moss roses" experiences; they are often able to freely give love and freely receive it.

But the burning question we need to address is how to extend the compassion of God and the love of Christ to people whose degree of "blow its" has resulted in pain in life.

Jesus' ministry was characterized by a high degree of compassion for those in pain. This point is emphasized by the Bible's shortest verse, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Very few people ask the question, but it is interesting to struggle with *why* Jesus wept. He knew he was going to raise Lazarus; there should have been no sadness for him in this event.

The answer is that he knew that his friends were sad because they could not comprehend resurrection. He cared about their pain even though he knew he was going to completely obliterate it in just a few moments.

In Luke 7:11-15, we see his compassion for the widow of Nain. This woman was completely dependent on her son; her livelihood and her station in life were being carried out the city gate with the body of her son. It would have been easy for Jesus to ignore this woman's pain and not get involved. But he cared about her, and he touched her with the unbelievable gift of raising her son.

Just 20 verses later we see him dealing with another kind of woman—likely a prostitute—who sat weeping and wiping his feet with her hair and anointing them with perfume. The Pharisees mumbled about his failure to maintain his purity by thrusting her away, but Jesus accepted her ministrations, forgave her sin, and sent her away in peace. The woman's misery was evident as she wept at the feet of Jesus—perhaps the first man from whom she ever felt true love. Jesus, like his host, could have ignored her or kicked her aside, but he felt her pain, valued her as a person, and allowed her to minister to him.

How can we extend that loving concern of Jesus to people today, particularly people struggling with "blow its"? Jesus should be the model for how we care for those in pain. We can honor mothers by taking the idealized example of their all-encompassing love and applying it to all of God's children who surround us.

My mother didn't know back in the spring of 1951 that she was planting moss roses in my heart, but she was. She didn't know she was planting the love of God either, but she was. We bring much of what our parents planted in childhood into our adult lives. For many of us, that is wonderful and we celebrate that good on Mother's and Father's Days. We thank mothers with miracles in touch.

But for some of us, the degree of the "blow its" is greater than the degree of the good memories. These people find it hard to celebrate Mother's and Father's Days, and to find a card that they can send with integrity. Luke's picture of Jesus suggests that he would have responded with great compassion and concern to the needs they felt. In honor of the love many of us learned from our parents and the love that God extends to all of us, we must strive to extend ever-greater amounts of understanding and compassion to those who have experienced so many "blow its."

Larry Augsburger, West Liberty, Ohio, is pastor of Oak Grove Mennonite Church. He also serves as a Gospel Herald *editorial consultant.*

Southern Baptists delegates urge members to boycott Disney

Delegates to the Southern Baptist Convention have urged members to boycott Walt Disney Co.'s parks, movies, and products to protest the company's departure from its "family values" image. The group opposes Disney's policy of providing health benefits to the partners of gay and lesbian employees. The Baptists also mention Disney's production of "questionable material" through subsidiaries such as the Miramax movie company and their promotion of alcohol use and gambling.

—National and International Religion Report

Half of all North Americans donate money to churches, research shows

Although church attendance is at its lowest level in 15 years, Americans remain active financial contributors to local churches and religious centers. That's according to a survey conducted by the Barna Research Group. Nearly half of all Americans (45 percent) donate money to a church or other place of worship in a typical month.

Forty-one percent of adults donate in a typical month to a nonprofit organization other than a church. Some 23 percent of adults give both to a church and to other types of nonprofit organizations.

Most Americans give away only a small percentage of money in relation to their total household income. Seventy-five percent of adults gave less than $500 to nonprofit organizations, including churches, in 1995.

—Barna Research Group

Prepacked, disposable communion business boasts success in churches

More than 4,000 churches are now using disposable prepackaged sacraments called the "Celebration Cup" produced by a Chicago-based company. The double-sealed plastic cup of juice or wine with unleavened bread wafer is sold in boxes of 210 or 500. The product has a shelf life of one year.

"It's convenient, economical, and safe," says Jim Johnson, president of Compak Corporation. His company spent $4 million to design and build equipment that would form the cups, seal the juice, and then the waferat a high speed. Johnson says his company receives 700 written inquiries daily about the prepacked communion. Compak offices have opened in Germany and China.

"Jesus provided the first fast-food meal when he fed the multitudes," Johnson says in defense of his product.—*Christianity Today*

Christian college education costs less than other private colleges

Christian college education is a good buy, according to a study by Stanley Clark, former academic dean at Tabor College. For the 1995-96 school year, Clark found that the average tuition and fees at member schools of the Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities was $9,801—$2,631 less than all private colleges surveyed.

—Mennonite Weekly Review

Atlanta churches plan service and evangelism efforts during Olympics

Fifteen hundred Atlanta churches from 28 denominations are cooperating on a number of evangelistic initiatives during the Olympic Games. Some 250 Christian music groups from 40 countries will perform at 23 churches, 40 sports-evangelism clinics will be held, and some 3,000 families are opening their homes to visitors. The Salvation Army and area churches will distribute an estimated 6 million cups of free, cold water at Olympic parking sites, and Habitat for Humanity plans to erect 33 homes through volunteer labor during the Games.

—National and International Religion Report

Two denominations consider sharing resources and programs

Brethren in Christ and Mennonite Brethren leaders met for the third time April 19-20 to explore working together and sharing resources between the two denominations.

Fifteen bishops and conference ministers, as well as moderators and general secretaries of the two groups, discussed issues such as mutual pastoral training and resources, sharing theological instructors, and cosponsoring seminars, retreats, and continuing education.

The groups will meet again in February 1997 in Fresno, Calif. They plan to invite representatives from mission and education groups in each denomination.

—joint release from the two denominations

'Christian Identity' claims 35,000 members in the United States

Adherents of a racist 19th-century theology called Christian Identity say that the Christians have displaced Jews as the "true Israelites" and that the United States is the new Promised Land and should belong solely to white Christians. That's according to Kenneth Stern in his new book, *A Force Upon the Plain: The America Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate.*

The Christian Identity group, with an estimated 35,000 members, taps into a growing patriot-militia movement, estimated at 5 million members. Believers in Christian Identity say that Jews dominate the government, which must be taken back by struggle.

—National and International Religion Report

East-West Hutterite split appears to be complete

The divorce between East and West seems to be complete as the group known as the Bruderhof has dropped the Hutterite name.

The relationship between the two groups began in 1930 when the Bruderhof—located in New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and England—was accepted into the Hutterian Brethren—settled mostly on U.S. and Canadian plains and west. Since 1990, most of the Hutterian Brethren have severed ties with the Bruderhof except for one small splinter group, and that relationship is now ended.

A November letter from the splinter group to the Bruderhof lists 10 accusations against the Eastern group and says, "It does not make sense to call one another brother and sister anymore."

—Mennonite Reporter

Martin Luther's personal Bible found in Stuttgart library

Martin Luther's Bible was recently found in a Stuttgart, Germany library. Filled with personal notes by the reformer himself, the Bible was printed in Latin in 1519 in Lyon, France. Luther apparently used the Bible between 1521-23 as preparation for his translation of the New Testament and the Pentateuch into German. A Spanish Catholic theologian working at cataloging discovered the book that had been stored unrecognized in the library since 1784.

—Reformed Ecumenical Council

Same emotions, different expressions:
Mental health workers discuss how to deal with victims of trauma

Chicago, Ill. (MCC)—"War is absolute madness. Getting sick is a normal response to madness," said Erich Zurcher, a psychiatrist from Switzerland, at a June mental health consultation sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Zurcher traveled to Russia as a participant in one of three Mental Health and Peace-building tours to war-torn areas of the world earlier this year.

The tours brought together three groups of mental health workers from North America and from the three regions they visited—Central America, Africa, and Europe. The tours culminated in a June 6-9 consultation in which 56 participants, including tour group members and other mental health practitioners, discussed their findings.

The tours' purpose was to explore ways to integrate mental health work with MCC's peacemaking and conciliation initiatives. Ray Brubacher, director of MCC's Overseas Services, said, "MCC decided to host these tours to broaden the group of health workers interested in trauma healing in places recovering from war. The tours fit MCC's goal of connecting people and institutions."

The tours also enabled people from one country to see how their situation was understood in another. When Violette Nyirarukundo from Rwanda traveled with her tour group to Swaziland, she found that Christians there knew about the trauma in Rwanda.

• • •

"At times I had asked God, 'Why do you want us to live when we prefer to die?' " said Nyirarukundo. "I have begun to see that the tragedy in Rwanda may bring unity in the churches. Our group was far from Rwanda in a small village in Swaziland. When people in the church heard I was from Rwanda, they wanted to pray for me. They danced and prayed for me and the people of Rwanda. I learned that God is using tragedy to bring people together."

The consultation showed how people are working at trauma healing in various settings. Marina Berkovskaya, a tour participant and psychologist from Moscow, said, "We are all humans and humans feel the same emotions, but we express them very differently in different cultures."

In Chechnya, Berkovskaya used healing methods that draw from people's internal resources. As people told their stories she listened for a way to "reframe" the events. As a short-term worker, Berkovskaya felt she could gain credibility partly because she was an outsider. "They know the information they give me will die with me," she said.

• • •

The tension between MCC's preference for long-term presence and most mental health workers' ability to provide short-term service was an issue that carried small-group discussions past their scheduled ending times and into the dinner hour. Ron Kraybill stressed the need for any short-term international work to be connected to a long-term relationship. Former director of Mennonite Conciliation Services, Kraybill has done short-term conciliation work for MCC as well as working long term in South Africa. "Short-term solutions tend to keep people locked in a crisis mode," said Kraybill. "Their focus is their survival as victims. People who are hurting want someone to come and save them. The temptation for us to try to meet that need is strong."—*Gwen Groff*

What do we believe?
The Giving Project drafts statements about money

Elkhart, Ind.—The Giving Project, a five-year stewardship emphasis among Mennonite churches, is currently testing a summary statement of Christian beliefs about money.

The Giving Project is also preparing a plan for how those beliefs are processed. Mennonite Publishing House and Faith & Life Press will jointly publish a book of the statement designed for group study and a manual for church action. These materials are part of a churchwide consulting process to be launched in the summer of 1997.

The Giving Project statements are:

Preamble:

• We live in a consumer-minded culture. Our culture insists we think about money all the time—how we will earn it, how we will spend it, and whether we have enough of it. Since money is such a dominant force in our life, as disciples of Jesus our faithfulness includes the actions we take with our money. This is why Christians need a statement of beliefs about money.

Beliefs:

• Because money has a godlike strength, our earning and use of money communicates our values. Christians are called to share God's values—that is, to view the world the way God does. God wants to redeem the world and provide an abundant life lived in God's presence. Christian people, then, are citizens of the kingdom God is building and are called to be loyal to its values. Our joyful response is to use money to help God provide abundance for all humanity.

• As Christians identify their beliefs about money, they must remember God desires to bring redemption and abundance through Jesus, our Christ and Lord of the universe. Because we joyfully meet the grace of God in Jesus, we live out our belief that God is owner of all, dedicating all of life in an act of worship to God, assisting God in redeeming the world. We show this dedication when we give back to God out of the first and best of the resources we manage on God's behalf and by managing the rest in generous ways that give glory to God.

• When we make decisions about generous and grace-filled living, we are helped by seeking the counsel of the church—our family of greatest importance.

Responses to these statements can be sent to Mark Vincent, The Giving Project, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517.

The Giving Project
Growing faithful stewards in the church

Pacific Northwest Conference integrates missions into total structure

Salem, Ore.—Missions and money. These two words dominated delegate discussion and action at the second annual sessions of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC) meeting at Western Mennonite School June 20-23.

The issue was how this newly integrated conference should handle its mission work. One of two former conferences, Pacific Coast (Mennonite Church) brought with it to integration a separate mission board with extensive work in Mexico. The other partner, the former Pacific District (General Conference Mennonite Church) had done its mission work through a committee that functioned as part of conference.

At this year's session, PNMC agreed to follow the latter model. As a result, the conference now has an integrated budget and two staff persons.

PNMC delegates made these decisions even as they confronted sobering financial statistics: the conference is 20 percent behind in contributions to a budget of $71,000. At the same time, giving to a $120,000 budget of the former mission board is more than 50 percent behind.

Too little or too much? The move to integrate mission work into the total conference structure had some delegates uneasy. "The fear is that missions will become less important for the conference," Cecil Miller, Warden, Wash., summarized.

"But why should our conference be doing the same kind of work as Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Board of Missions [MC], and the Commission on Overseas Mission [GC]?" asked Marg Nisly of Seattle, Wash.

"We may not have all the answers," moderator John Willems, Salem, Ore., told the delegates as he summarized the discussion. "But the God who has acted in the past will continue to act in the future."

Money and power. Designated giving also became an issue with which PNMC delegates had to wrestle. They learned that several congregations and individuals who had withdrawn from the former Pacific Coast Conference still designate funds for mission work in Mexico.

"Do these designations go to the amount we budget for missions, or are they immediately seen as above-budget?" asked Marion Schrock, Salem.

If the latter, then missions could expand without conference approval, noted Willard Kennel, Salem. "In that way, designated giving becomes a power play with money," cautioned LeRoy Chupp, Portland.

In the end, delegates agreed unanimously that designated giving would be "applied to specific budget categories until the budget is met and then be applied as above-budget to that category."

In other business, PNMC delegates agreed to hire conference minister Larry Hauder for another three-year full-time term. They elected Cleon Claassen, Moses Lake, Wash., as moderator and Pat Hershberger, Woodburn, Ore., as assistant moderator.

Believers in a pagan world. Paul Lederach, Souderton, Pa., was guest preacher for three worship services. From his opening, in which he noted that he has spent the past two and one-half years in day-by-day study of 1 Peter, Lederach mesmerized capacity audiences with exposition from that book.

"Peter is writing to Christians to help them understand what it is to be believers in a pagan world," Lederach said, noting how this writing speaks clearly for today. "He is helping them set boundaries for their life together."

Lederach also had words of encouragement for the conference. "Having been a minister in the Mennonite Church for over 50 years, I believe the church is better today than ever," he said. "I am so glad that in so many places we've gotten beyond the bondage of legalism and that there is a newness in our understanding of the nature of God's grace."—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Canadian Mennonites give freely to refugees

Winnipeg, Man. (MCC Canada)—Fifty million dollars—that's an estimate of how much Canadian Mennonites and Brethren in Christ have given to help some 10,000 refugees come to Canada since 1979.

For Mennonite Central Committee Canada executive director Marvin Frey, the amount of money given to help refugees is noteworthy. "It's incredible to think that in addition to donating almost $100 million [Cdn.] to MCC Canada since 1979, Canadian Mennonites and Brethren in Christ have given an additional $50 million to help refugees."

When congregations sponsor refugees through MCC, they promise to look after their financial needs for one year. Gloria Nafziger, who directs MCC Canada's work with refugees, says that no church has defaulted on its promise.

In 1979, when "boat people" were fleeing Vietnam, MCC Canada was the first church agency to sign a master agreement with the Canadian government to help refugees.

"There are still lots of refugees who need to be sponsored today," says Nafziger, noting that the majority of cases are people from the former Yugoslavia.

PNMC adopts statement against church burnings

Salem, Ore.—Instead of giving an annual report to Pacific Northwest delegates, the conference's Peace and Justice Committee brought a "resolution regarding church burnings" to the floor.

Noting that the June 20-23 sessions of PNMC began on the same day that the predominately African-American Immanuel Christian Fellowship in Portland, Ore., was damaged by arson, the resolution called the conference to "condemn any act of violence against any person or persons motivated by hatred."

It also asked conference congregations to:

- find practical ways to stand in solidarity with African-American brothers and sisters;
- support efforts of agencies facilitating the rebuilding of churches recently destroyed by burning throughout the U.S.;
- pray for those who persecute others because of their race;
- reaffirm the beauty and dignity of all persons;
- strengthen cross-cultural relationships within the PNMC community;
- remember that through Christ the church is more than victorious over evil.

PNMC delegates were unanimous in their adoption of the resolution.

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Hauling sand, Mayan-style. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Donna Freeman carries sand up a mountainside to help build a home for a widow of Guatemala's violence who also belongs to a craft cooperative. Donna and her husband, Richard, led a group from Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church that spent two weeks in late February helping build a house for the woman. The ten participants paid their own way and their congregation gave money for supplies and to hire a Guatemalan mason and two helpers. Mennonite Central Committee workers helped arrange the projects.

The Ruth and Nohemi Crafts Cooperative in Chontolá was founded by 16 Quiche Indian widows whose husbands were murdered or disappeared in Guatemala's political violence. "The women told us normally husbands would do this work, but so many men were missing," says Freeman. "The women's faith in God despite persecution had a great impact on us."

Freeman says the personal connection to Guatemalan Christians was a highlight for the group. "One participant told me she prays for the people of Guatemala every day now," she says.

Three Canadian colleges move toward joining forces

Winnipeg, Man. (Mennonite Reporter)—The vision of three Winnipeg colleges joining together is closer to reality. Earlier this year each of the schools—Concord, Menno Simons, and Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC)—appointed people to serve on a "federation committee."

The committee created eight subcommittees at its second meeting on May 9.

"One of the critical steps is that committees are actually beginning to work under the college federation committee," said CMBC president John H. Neufeld. "There is much more detail being processed."

Faculty from all three colleges have met several times since May 1994 to discuss increasing cooperation. The most recent joint faculty meeting was hosted by Menno Simons on June 6. Faculty and the federation committee will meet Aug. 22 to work at vision and academic program and building a spirit of cooperation.

The Conference of Mennonites in Canada owns CMBC. Concord College is sponsored by the Mennonite Brethren conferences in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, and Menno Simons is operated by an association called "Friends of Menno Simons College."

"The interest was always there to develop a single institution," says George Richert, president of Menno Simons College.

John Neufeld, president of CMBC, expressed a hope that the administration, faculty, and board of the new entity would operate in a collaborative and collegial manner—"in a churchly way"—rather than one group as "over against" another.

—Aiden Sclichting Enns

VS workers help transform city neighborhood

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—Voluntary Service workers at a Mennonite Board of Missions VS house in Washington, D.C., have recently played a role in the closing of two alleged "crack houses," where people gather illegally to use crack cocaine.

The action has helped diminish crime in the Washington neighborhood where two VS houses are located. In recent years, long-term VSer Cole Hull was assaulted and robbed by two men while passersby looked on, doing nothing.

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Incidents like these have, in the past, not been at all unusual in the multi-ethnic neighborhood. Occurrences of this nature moved the units to join with local residents, the Sojourners Neighborhood Center, and a Christian Peacemaker Team to take the neighborhood back from the drug dealers, prostitutes, and robbers. Neighborhood "orange hat" patrols walked the streets and particularly targeted the so-called crack houses owned by what long-term VS worker Wes Hare calls "slum lords."

In addition, the Washington VS unit found $3,000 in their budget to give toward the effort to shut down the crack houses. Since June 1994, the efforts of the neighborhood action group led city officials to close two crack houses for housing code violations. The first closed Dec. 7, 1994; the doors of the second were shut Feb. 27, 1996.

"People feel good about it. It's a feel-good activity when people can work through the bureaucratic red tape to get something like this done," Hare says.

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Through his VS assignment with CPT, Hare worked with orange hat patrols, letter-writing campaigns, and general organization of the neighborhood residents into an active group determined to make their neighborhood safe for everyone living there.

Hare sees a need for VS to become even more involved in public-witness efforts, as the recent events in Washington demonstrated. "My involvement in closing the crack house was to try to put our faith into action . . . to act out the nonviolent beliefs that we have," Hare says.

—Christy Risser

YES team shares Christian faith stories in Swedish public schools

Jokkmokk, Sweden (EMM)—On the Scandinavian Peninsula, just above the Arctic Circle, lies the little town of Jokkmokk. Most people have never heard of it. But five North American young people are calling it home for eight months.

Since 1987, Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) has sent three Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams to serve with the Free Church of Jokkmokk.

"I initially questioned whether or not a team of North American Christian young people were really wanted or needed in this little town," says Megan Heisey, a member of the team in Jokkmokk. Sweden has the highest standard of living in the western world, as well as a 99 percent literacy rate.

"What I discovered very quickly," says Heisey, "is the challenge of explaining the gospel in terms that non-Christians who have no church background and who know next to nothing about the Bible or 'Christianese' language can understand."

Few active members. Heisey and her teammates, Beth Kauffman, Troy Hoover, Dan Mongeau, and team leader Angie Hunsberger, spend time assisting English teachers in the junior high schools. Each team member leads a discussion group of Swedish youth.

In Sweden, the Lutheran church is the state church. Every Swedish citizen is a member of the state church by birth, unless otherwise requested. Sweden maintains freedom of religion for other denominations and religions. Although 90 percent of the population is Protestant, very few are active members in the church.

Dispelling myths. Discussions YES team members have had with youth at English camps and at Grottan, the youth cafe which the church opens twice each week, are opportunities to dispel the myths the youth have about the church or Christianity. Heisey exclaims, "Even a decade ago, the report of Christians who separated themselves from the state church were suspected of being a sect or some 'weird' group."

EMM's Discipleship Ministries provides discipleship training and service opportunities each year for approximately 200 youth, young adults, and other voluntary workers.—*Carol Wert*

Urban 'barn-raising' effort builds church

Toledo, Ohio—Over 260 volunteers helped to raise the new facility of Toledo (formerly Bancroft) Mennonite Church during the first two weeks of June. Workers from rural Ohio and beyond built a structure in a fashion similar to an Amish barn-raising that made a simultaneous statement about mutual service, say church members.

When the congregation sold its outgrown building five years ago, erecting a new structure was not really an option. After renting and considering renovation of older churches, however, members of the 50-year-old congregation decided to construct a new facility. In conjunction with an architectural firm, the building committee planned a structure to be built in part by volunteer labor that reduced costs but also made a statement about mutual service. Church member Dennis Smith organized the daily work for volunteer crews to interact with contracted workers.

Building blitz. The response to requests for aid was overwhelming, according to church members. The two-week blitz, unhindered by the frequent rain showers, culminated June 15 with the 14,000-square-foot building under roof.

Located on four acres next to a high school, the tall post-and-beam skeleton and rapid shaping of the church attracted attention from the local community and media. A striped tent provided food and drink for volunteers and curious neighbors alike. Church members provided lodging for out-of-town volunteers.

The congregation hopes to be in its new building by fall.

—*Barbara Hodel and Celia Lehman*

An unusual retirement party. *Upland, Pa. (EMM)*—Luke and Miriam Stoltzfus receive a prayer of blessing from (left to right) Freeman Miller, Richard Landis, and Leon Schnupp, current bishops in the Delaware Valley districts of Lancaster (Pa.) Conference. A celebration was held on June 2 in honor of the Stoltzfus' 45 years of service to Lancaster Conference congregations. They moved to Philadelphia in 1951, and Luke was ordained bishop for the Philadelphia-Chester District in 1965. When southern New Jersey was added, the region was renamed the Delaware Valley District and has grown into three districts comprised of 25 churches. The district has become increasingly diverse, so that the current cluster of churches includes more than ten ethnic groups.

Luke Stoltzfus retired in 1995. During the celebration, the three current bishops of the Delaware Valley districts presented the Stoltzfuses with a commemorative plaque, a framed picture of the couple, a VCR, and checks from various churches. A group of ministers joined the bishops to pray for the couple.

- **Tanzanians killed in accident.** Tanzanian Mennonite pastor Hezekiah Chacha, his wife Lois, and brother Manassah were killed June 14 in an automobile accident near Arusha, Tanzania. Three relatives were also injured. More than 2,000 people attended the Chacha's funeral service, reports Glen Brubaker, Eastern Mennonite Missions worker in Tanzania. Hezekiah was chair of the board of the Shirati Hospital. The Chachas are survived by six children.

- **Martins receive awards.** Robert and Nancy Martin, Lancaster, Pa., received the Doctor and Nurse of the Year awards from the Mennonite Medical Association and Mennonite Nurses Association, respectively. The Martins were honored at the annual meeting of MMA and MNA at Laurelville (Pa.) Mennonite Church Center, June 20-23. The Martins spent 18 years with Mennonite Board of Missions at the Nazareth Hospital in Israel.

- **Wind destroys church.** Strong winds destroyed a Mennonite church building in Lela, Kenya, in May. Kenyan Mennonites had completed a new roof for the building one month previously. Jerry Stutzman, Eastern Mennonite Missions worker, reports that such damage to buildings from strong winds is not uncommon in that area of Kenya. The Lela congregation is planning to rebuild, estimating the cost at $1,425. EMM will assist in the rebuilding.

- **Call for papers.** The Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups, Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, is inviting papers for a conference, "Anabaptists in Conversation: Mennonites and Brethren Interactions with Theologies in the Twentieth Century," June 19-21, 1997. More information is available from Theron F. Schlabach, 717 361-1470. Deadline for proposals is Dec. 1.

- **MWC invites contributions.** Mennonite World Conference is inviting contributions to its travel fund that assists General Council delegates representing MWC member churches outside of North America and Europe. The fund covers a portion of travel, lodging, and meal costs for India 1997 in January. More information is available from 519 571-0060.

- **Atlanta church begins hospitality house.** Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship will purchase the former Mennonite Central Committee Atlanta unit house to begin a Hospitality House ministry in September. Several members of the church will live in the house, providing up to three rooms for people with short-term housing needs—such as the homeless, temporarily displaced, ill, recently released from prison, or new to the city. Contributions toward a downpayment on the house can be sent to Patty King, 303 Augusta Ave., Atlanta, GA 30312.

- **Mennonite to Bosnia.** Joseph Shenk of Copiague, N.Y., is participating in one of two teams of United States citizens spending two weeks in the former Yugoslavia with Fellowship of Reconciliation. Shenk will help with rebuilding efforts and will stay with local families.

- **Lafayette changes site.** The Lafayette (Ind.) Mennonite Fellowship has moved Sunday worship to Lafayette Friends Meetinghouse. Services now begin at 9 a.m. The Friends and Mennonite congregations plan to cooperate on children's programs, fellowship times, and service projects.

- **New appointments:**

Marvin Friesen, principal and head administrator of the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center.

Dennis Good, director of operations at Faith & Life Press, Newton, Kan.

R. Michael Lehman, director of financial resources at Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.

Myrna Miller, assistant principal of the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center.

Karen Moshier-Shenk, regional director of development, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Naomi Paine, office coordinator of Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Ed Robbins completed his term as pastor of Watertown (N.Y.) Mennonite Church on June 30.

Mark Winslow concluded a pastorate at Good Shepherd Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz., on June 2.

- **Coming events:**

Senior adult week, Laurelville (Pa.) Mennonite Church Center, Aug. 25-30. Peter Dyck is the resource person. More information from 800 839-1021.

National consultation on Anabaptist evangelism and resourcing/programming, Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., Sept. 8-9. Focuses on evangelistic outreach from an Anabaptist perspective. Sponsored by the Andrew Center. More information from Paul Mundey at 800 774-3360.

- **New books:**

Mandy, the ninth book in Ellie's People Amish fiction series, is written by Mary Christner Borntrager. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

Meditation for New Parents, written by Gerald and Sarah Wenger Shenk, is the new addition to a series of meditation books for parents published by Herald Press. Includes inspirational writings and poetry and prose to provide one month of daily meditations. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

One Farm, Two Wars, Three Generations is the story of the Hege family in France during the first half of the twentieth century. Written by Erica Hege Shirk, the story details the history of the Schafbusch farm in the Alsace, France. Available for $8 from Erica Shirk, 177 East Main Street, Leola, PA 17540.

- **Job openings:**

Voluntary service positions, Camp Luz, Orrville, Ohio. Responsibilities include assisting with maintenance, food service, and hospitality. Housing, food, medical insurance, and stipend provided. Couple preferred. Contact Herb Lantz at 330 683-1246.

NEW MEMBERS

Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, Atlanta, Ga.: Patty King, Louise Rugh, and Jim Rugh.

Boyer, Middleburg, Pa.: Stacy Hunsberger, Miriam Yoder, and Brian Yoder.

Clarence Center-Akron, Akron, N.Y.: JoAnn Betzold and Gary Betzold.

Hartville, Ohio: Laura Briggs, Kevin Archer, Samuel Blough, Tiffany Brown, Justin Domer, Justin Miller, Neil Nisly, Kevin Raber, Jay Romans, Eva Mae Shrock, Maria Shrock, Vincent Shrock, Pat Slabaugh, Wendy Wagler, Adam Shilling, Jake Hershberger, Gabe Hostetler, Debbie Hostetler, Steve Briggs, Marti Briggs, and Jeremy Briggs.

Hopedale, Ill.: Darrin Eichelberger, Craig Litwiller, Benjamin Smith, and Herbert and Bertha Dalke.

Lockport, Stryker, Ohio: Donald R. Beck, Brooke Beck, Floyd Beck, Elsie Beck, Barbara Beck, and Vivian Yekisa.

North Clinton, Wauseon, Ohio: Cindy Allan, Meagan Beck, Shannon Blosser, Katie Eicher, Shaun Gugel, Angela Richer, and Emma Richer.

Salem, Ore.: Phil and Jeannie Berg-Rempel, Lois Kenagy, and Marguerite Kenagy.

Sunrise, Clackamas, Ore.: Andi Mead, Doris Schoessler, and Diane Wahlbrink.

West Clinton, Wauseon, Ohio: Angela Frey.

Western, Salem, Ore.: Lynette Boettger, Connie Brewton, Israel Chavez, Michael Hildebrant, Donald Koskela, and Kelly Koskela.

BIRTHS

Avery, Regina Rensen and Paul, Palm, Pa., Luke Thomas (fourth child), June 14.

Cain, Annie, Kokomo, Ind., Christian Jaycob (first child), May 3.

Gerig, Kristi Schmidt and Gary, Terrebonne, Ore., Nicholas Eugene (first child), June 10.

Hostetter, Stacy Hunsberger and Gregory, Narvon, Pa., Micah Evan (first child), June 5.

Johnson-Evers, Connie and Steve, Goshen, Ind., Kyle Steven (second child), June 3.

Kauffman, Dawn Stutzman and Ron, Wauseon, Ohio, Joshua Marc (second child), May 31.

Lehman, Suzanne Schmucker and James, Grove City, Ohio, Rebecca Mae (second child), May 1.

Shrock, Sheila Kropf and Alvie, Brownsville, Ore., Austin James (second child), June 13.

Steckle, Bonnie Roes and Brian, Zurich, Ont., Dylan Brian (first child), June 4.

Stichter, Evelyn Handel and Tim, East Salem, Pa., Grant Logan (first child), May 13.

MARRIAGES

Alderfer-Gehman: Douglas Alan Alderfer, Harrisonburg, Va. (Lindale), and Kathleen R. Gehman, Harrisonburg, Va. (Valley View), June 15, by Michael Shenk II.

Brubaker-Lindsey: Chris Brubaker, Amity, Ore. (Western), and Diana Lindsey, McMinnville, Ore. (Western), May 18, by Dave Stutzman.

Darling-Gingerich: Rob Darling, Brantford, Ont. (Missionary), and Sara Gingerich, Zurich, Ont. (Zurich), June 15, by Philip Bender.

Ewy-Zanta: Robert Ewy, West Lafayette, Ind. (Lafayette Fellowship), and Carolyn Zanta, Goshen, Ind. (Assembly), June 15, by Mary Lehman Yoder.

Gingerich-Persaud: Cynthia Gingerich, Zurich, Ont. (Zurich), and Nathan Persaud, North Bay, Ont. (Pentecostal Assembly), May 18, by Philip Bender.

Goertzen-Moutray: Bradford Goertzen, Goshen, Ind. (Alexanderwohl), and Ruth Moutray, Goshen, Ind. (United Methodist), June 15, by Robert L. Shreiner.

Good-Reinford: Elizabeth Joy Good, Perkasie, Pa. (Doylestown), and Randall Floyd Reinford, Sellersville, Pa. (Franconia), June 1, by Duane Bishop and Jay Delp.

Grainger-Reparon: Tina Grainger, Zurich, Ont. (Zurich), and Timothy Reparon, London, Ont. (Pentecostal), May 25, by Philip Bender.

Scott-Hackman: Philip Hackman, Hatfield, Pa. (Grace), and Kelly Scott, Telford, Pa. (Salem), May 18, by Elmer Frederick.

Hansen-Schlabach: Laura Hansen, Loudenville, Ohio, and Richard Schlabach, Hartville, Ohio (Hartville), June 15, by Henry Shrock.

Janssen-Visscher: Peter Janssen, Lucan, Ont. (Zurich), and Tanya Visscher, Exeter, Ont. (Pentecostal), May 4, by Vernon Dean.

Keller-Wagner: Laura Keller, Quakertown, Pa. (Salem), and Scott Wagner, Quakertown, Pa. (Salem), May 25, by Elmer Frederick.

Miller-Schrock: Milton J. Miller, Goshen, Ind., and Ruby Schrock, Goshen, Ind. (First), March 15, by J. Clair Shenk.

Roth-Thomas: Arlin Roth, Chambersburg, Pa. (Marion), and Geri Thomas, Hollsopple, Pa. (Thomas), June 22, by Nelson R. Roth (father of the groom).

DEATHS

Bachman, David, 82, Hopedale, Ill. Born: Feb. 3, 1914, Howard, S.D., to Jacob and Katherine Zimmerman Bachman. Died: June 13, 1996, Hopedale, Ill. Survivors—wife: Aldine Metz Bachman; children: Roger, Eunice Kay Harris, Marilyn Litwiller, Alice Slager; brothers: Richard, Alvin, Leonard; 11 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 17, Hopedale Mennonite Church, by H. James Smith and Michael Wayne Knowles.

Bowers, Silence Ethel Norenberg, 84, Iowa City, Iowa. Born: Jan. 4, 1912, Surrey, N.D., to George and Gracie Grove Norenberg. Died: June 6, 1996, Iowa City, Iowa, of a stroke. Survivors—children: Paul, Nancy Nissley; sisters: Olive Hornecker, Goldie Wonick, Winfred Norenberg; 9 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren, 3 step-great-grandchildren, 2 step-great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: R. Maynard Bowers (husband). Memorial service: June 15, First Mennonite Church, by Diane Zaerr. Body donated to medical research.

Groff, Jacob R., 63, Holtwood, Pa. Born: April 19, 1933, Quarryville, Pa., to Clayton and Mary Rohrer Groff. Died: May 4,1996, Holtwood, Pa., of accidental electrocution. Survivors—wife: Ruth Miller Groff; children: Donald J., Gerald D., D. Jean Hurst, R. Ann High, J. Lynne Redcay; brothers and sisters: Aaron R., John C., Elias R., Elsie Shirk, Mary R. Hershey, Martha R. Weaver; 12 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 8, New Providence Mennonite Church, by J. Kenneth Hershey and Bob Harnish.

Headings, Levi, 91, Hutchinson, Kan. Born: Oct. 30, 1904, Hutchinson, Kan., to Valentine J. and Mary Ann Helmuth Headings. Died: June 20, 1996, South Hutchinson, Kan. Survivors—wife: Mary Miller Headings; children: Keith, Robert, Phillip, Sanford, Lois Burrell; brother and sisters: John, Barbara, Mary Nisly; 16 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, 15 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 22, Yoder Mennonite Church, by Dan Kauffman and Peter Hartman.

Helmuth, Erwin J., 83, Sarasota, Fla. Born: Oct. 3, 1912, Arthur, Ill. Died: June 16, 1996, Sarasota, Fla., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Dora Schlabach Helmuth; children: Nancy Benjamin, Susanne Blackman, Timothy E.; brothers and sisters: Fred, Freeman, Edna Bozer, Cora Troyer, Alta Jantz; 7 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, by Barry Loop. Burial: Palms Memorial Park.

Series redesigned. *Scottdale, Pa. (MPH)*—Editor Levi Miller and designer Merrill Miller inspect the first copies of the redesigned *Adult Bible Study* in the bindery of Mennonite Publishing House (MPH). The new design of the Bible study guides is an attempt to make the series "friendlier" to young adults, according to publishers at MPH and Faith & Life Press. "Younger people want to study the Bible but need resources relevant to their life experiences," says Susan Janzen of Faith & Life Press, the publishing arm of the General Conference Mennonite Church. "Our desire is to continue serving our longtime users and also invite new people to consider *Adult Bible Study.*"

The series, with a circulation of 30,000 per quarter, is based on outlines of the Committee on the Uniform Series, a group representing 25 denominations. Publishers estimate that on any given Sunday approximately 44 million adults are studying materials based on these outlines.

Hunsberger, Jacob Marvin, 41, Duncannon, Pa. Born: Aug. 1, 1954, Phoenixville, Pa., to Jacob Good and Erma M. Stauffer Hunsberger. Died: May 26, 1996, Duncannon, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—children: Justin, Allison, Jonathan; mother; brothers and sisters: Willis, Kenneth, Dorothy, Lucille. Funeral: May 30, Ronald C. L. Smith Funeral Home, by Dale Rosenberger and Garland Meyers. Burial: Union Cemetery.

Kavelman, Viola Boshart, 75, Cambridge, Ont. Born: July 27, 1920, Philipsburg, Ont., to Henry and Ada Kennell Boshart. Died: June 13, 1996, Cambridge, Ont. Survivors—children: Grace McGraw, Joan, Dennis, Edward; sisters: Audrey Gingrich, Bertha Veitch; 7 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Neil H. Kavelman (husband). Funeral and burial: June 15, Erb Street Mennonite Church, by Renee Sauder and Doug Snyder.

Kulp, Howard L., 79, Telford, Pa. Born: June 4, 1916, Lansdale, Pa., to Abram B. and Esther Lapp Kulp. Died: May 27, 1996, Quakertown, Pa. Survivors—wife: Beulah Gotwals Kulp; daughters: Lois Johnstone, Ruth Coates; 3 grandchildren. Memorial service and burial: June 4, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by David A. Stevens and Truman H. Brunk.

Martin, Clarence B., 77, Lancaster, Pa. Born: Dec. 16, 1918, East Earl Twp., Pa., to Phares and Susie Bauman Martin. Died: June 7, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—wife: Barbara Yoder Martin; brother and sisters: Weaver B., Edna Kurtz, Nora Martin, Grace Weaver. Funeral: June 12, Forest Hills Mennonite Church, by J. Lester Graybill and Doug Kaufman. Burial: Blue Ball Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Martin, Nelson M., 67, Meadville, Pa. Born: Jan. 23, 1928, Waterloo County, Ont., to Amos C. and Louisa Martin. Died: May 7, 1996, Leesburg, Fla., of an intestinal rupture and infection. Survivors—wife: Wilma Augsburger Martin; children: Beverly Martin, Charlene Weinberger, Karen Hartwig, Ray, Carl; brothers and sisters: Henry, Emerson, Clarence, Velina Martin, Mary Weber, Verna Martin; 8 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Sunnyside Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 11, Steinmann Mennonite Church, by Amsey Martin and Victor Dorsch. Burial: St. Agatha Mennonite Church Cemetery.

He was ordained in 1961 and pastored Mennonite churches for 35 years in Ontario, Canada, and Pennsylvania.

Miller, Elsie K. Shettler, 84, Kalona, Iowa. Born: June 6, 1912, Harper, Kan., to Edward J. and Mary Troyer Shettler. Died: June 12, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—children: Judy Yoder, Ed, Dennis; sisters: Verda Layman, Grace Reece; 6 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Dennis M. Miller (husband). Funeral and burial: June 15, East Union Mennonite Church, by Noah Helmuth and Marv Rempel.

Nofziger, Fannie S. Yutzie, 86, Albany, Ore. Born: March 12, 1910, Albany, Ore., to Solomon and Mattie Ropp Yutzie. Died: June 7, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—stepchildren: Willard, Bernard, Dorothy Stutzman, Louise Gerig, Bernetta Stutzman; sister: Alice Lindberg. Predeceased by: Elvin Nofziger (husband). Funeral: June 10, Fairview Mennonite Church, by Al Burkey and Clarence Gerig. Burial: Riverside Cemetery.

Nafziger, Gerald L., 61, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Dec. 7, 1934, Archbold, Ohio, to Elmer J. and Lillie Yoder Nafziger. Died: June 11, 1996, Toledo, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Eleanor Jean Stuckey Nafziger; children: Lynn, Sandra Zehr, Beverly Krabill; brother: Carl; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: June 14, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman, Lois Hartman, Roger Steffy, and Randy Nafziger. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Newcomer, Hilda Kreider, 83, Seville, Ohio. Born: Feb. 12, 1913, Media County, Ohio, to Elias and Nettie Loehr Kreider. Died: June 11, 1996, Rittman, Ohio. Survivors—husband: Elban K. Newcomer; children: Jerry, Carl, Faye Litwiller, Kathleen Springer, Jean Miller; sister: Alma Newcomer; 15 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 15, Bethel Mennonite Church, by Leonard D. Hershey. Burial: Maple Hill Cemetery.

Rediger, Maurice Benjamin, 75, Albany, Ore. Born: Nov. 28, 1920, Milford, Neb., to William and Mary Kramer Rediger. Died: June 7, 1996, Lebanon, Ore. Survivors—wife: Mazie Hines Rediger; children: Judy Sessions, Carolyn Stutzman, Coralee Knox, Ben; brothers and sisters: Wayne, Dale, Harley, Ethel Stutzman, Mildred Miller; 11 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 12, Fairview Mennonite Church, by Al Burkey. Burial: Alford Cemetery.

Schrock, Ruby Ann Miller, 69, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Nov. 1, 1926, Kalona, Iowa, to Sherman and Emma Miller. Died: June 5, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—children: Norma, Alice Hochstetler, Allen, Norman, Dallas, Gary; sisters: Ellen Yoder, Nita Miller, Barbara Eichelberger; 13 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Robert Schrock (husband) and Gail (daughter). Funeral and burial: June 9, East Union Mennonite Church, by Noah Helmuth and Marv Rempel.

Schrock, Wayne K., 64, Wauseon, Ohio. Born: Aug. 6, 1931, Fulton County, Ohio, to Cletus and Phoebe Stuckey Schrock. Died: May 2, 1996, Fulton County, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Mary Halbert Schrock; children: Christine O'Brien, Steve, Lori Frey; brothers and sisters: Dale, Ray, James, John, Rosie Nofziger, Mableann Crossgrove; 9 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Scott (infant son). Funeral: May 4, North Clinton Mennonite Church, by Gary Blosser. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Shenk, John H., 85, Sarasota, Fla. Born: April 19, 1911, Newport News, Va., to Daniel and Matilda Shenk. Died: June 15, 1996, Sarasota, Fla. Survivors—wife: Emily Brackbill Shenk; children: Judy Ranck, Irma Lewis, Milton, John Carl, Dan, Jerry, Richard, Nelson; 14 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Funeral service: June 17, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, by Jim Miller II and Barry Loop. Funeral and burial: June 18, Warwick River Mennonite Church, by Gordon Zook, H. Michael Shenk, and Lloyd Weaver, Jr.

He was ordained in 1941 and served several congregations in Sarasota.

Stoltzfus, Amos B., 91, Lancaster, Pa. Born: Oct. 5, 1904, Salisbury Twp., Pa., to John and Annie Beiler Stoltzfus. Died: May 18, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—wife: Annie Beiler; daughter: Marian Johnson; brother and sister: John, Sarah Glick; 4 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: May 22, Millwood Mennonite Church, by Wilbert Lind and Calvin Beiler.

Troyer, Ethel Irene Zook, 92, West Liberty, Ohio. Born:Feb. 14, 1904, New Castle, Pa., to Enoch J. and Mary Emma Spiker Zook. Died: May 13, 1996, West Liberty, Ohio. Survivors—stepchildren: Robert, Fred, Lucille Christophel; brothers and sisters: Orren and Homer Zook, Sarah Eshleman, Mary Emma Barkley; 17 step-grandchildren, 42 step-great-grandchildren, 5 step-great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Menno Troyer (husband) and Leonard (stepson). Congregational membership: Oak Grove Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: May 15, Salem Mennonite Church, by Larry Augsburger.

Umble, Melba R. Shetler, 82 Coatesville, Pa. Born: Nov. 22, 1913, Atglen, Pa., to William H. and Lydia Kauffman Shetler. Died: June 7, 1996, Coatesville, Pa. Survivors—husband: Leon H. Umble; children: Mary Ellen Ness, Lawrence, Dale, Marian, David, Linda, Shirley Lambert; sister: Frances Stoltzfus; 10 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 11, Millwood Mennonite Church, by Earl Graybill, Herman Glick, and Nathan Brunk.

Weirich, Ruth E. Stutzman, 61, Shipshewana, Ind. Born: Nov. 29, 1934, Etna Green, Ind., to Edward and Mary Slabaugh Stutzman. Died: June 3, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Eli Weirich; sons: James, David, Robert; mother; sisters: Velma Miller, Catherine Bender; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: June 6, First Mennonite Church, by Joe Slabach and John F. Murray. Burial: Grace Lawn Cemetery.

Yoder, Mary Jane, 73, Archbold, Ohio. Born: March 18, 1923, Pettisville, Ohio, to Roy E. and Pearl Zaerr Yoder. Died: June15, 1996, Toledo, Ohio. Survivor—sister: Rutheda Short. Funeral: June 19, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman, Lois Hartman, and Royce Short. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Newspaper

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A better light than fire!

Linda Goertz of Portland, Ore., has a creative idea. Concerned about the more than 30 churches—mostly African-American—that have been burned by arson in the U.S. in the past 18 months, Linda persuaded her congregation to take a stand against this evil.

Portland Mennonite will have a "building-less Sunday" on July 28. To show their opposition to racism and solidarity with those who are suffering, this congregation of 210 members will close its doors and meet outside.

The morning service, to be held in the parking lot, will include mourning and repentance for the racism still evident in our culture. But it will also celebrate the good news that good can triumph over evil, that God can bring healing even from what divides the races.

"When we first thought of closing our church for the day, all kinds of worries and objections came up," Linda says. "What if it rains? What if it's really hot? What about older people, the infirm? Where can we have the nursery? How will people hear? Do we really mean we can't go inside to use the bathrooms? Where will we park if we use the parking lot? Will the neighbors be upset if we use the street or if we're loud?"

Linda reports that the congregation found the answers in other questions: "How do the folks at Glorious Church of God in Christ (burned by arson in Richmond, Va.) manage? Where do the babies sleep at Rosemary Baptist (Barnwell, S.C.)? How does the grandmother at Rising Star Baptist (Greensboro, Ala.) hear the sermons?"

Members of Portland Mennonite have been contacting other churches in their city to join them in their demonstration. They also brought their idea to Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference the middle of last month.

Indeed, the very day that PNMC began meeting, a predominantly African-American church in Portland became the latest victim of arson. Besides passing a resolution against this evil (see story on page 10), many delegates indicated they would urge their congregations to join Portland in its building-less Sunday.

Linda's idea and Portland's move is one that all Mennonite congregations in the U.S. and Canada might well consider—either on July 28, or on a Sunday when it's more convenient (though I suspect few if any of the 35 congregations that have lost their buildings by fire would say it happened when convenient).

Why consider a building-less Sunday?

• ***Because we are against racism.*** We say so repeatedly—in official statements, in our congregations, in our hearts. Yet, if we're honest, many of us must admit that we live and our congregations are located in places where most people are like us: white, middle-class, relatively well-off.

Here's a chance to show solidarity and support for a group of people who are oppressed, even as they attempt to worship. Think of the impact if some 1,000 Mennonite congregations across the U.S. and Canada closed their doors for one Sunday sometime this summer because they believe racism is sin—especially if those congregations are located in areas where there is little contact between different races.

• ***Because of our history.*** Mennonites too have known fire. Not for buildings but for bodies. That's not been too many generations ago. Jog your memory by checking out some of our stories in *Martyrs Mirror*. Our history should make us sympathetic to any group facing oppression, for whatever reason.

One response to the recent church burnings has been to send Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers to rebuild the Mount Zoar Baptist Church in Green County, Ala. Only a few of us can get involved in this way. A building-less Sunday is one way more of us can show our support for those who are oppressed.

• ***Because if color of skin matters now, beliefs could be next.*** It's a short road from oppression for one reason to persecution for another. Mennonites found that out in the past in places like Russia, Germany, and Ethiopia. "It can't happen here," they said. But it did.

Nor have we any guarantees in North America. The evil that burns African-American churches today could turn against people who believe in turning the other cheek tomorrow. Peace church people, whatever their color, could well be the next victims reaching out for other Christians to take a stand with us against whatever it is we face.

"Spread the word to other churches," Linda Goertz writes in a short press release on the Portland Mennonite idea. "We can shine a better light than fire!"—*jlp*

July 16, 1996

Jesus came to offer us a new and different way—the way of grace as a free gift. And when we accept that generous gift through Christ, we are freed from the law, and we are no longer bound to the old system.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Theron Schlabach:
My religio-socio-political creed on social responsibility 6

Steve J. Good:
Mennonite M & M's 8

New policy allows Canadian COs in military to obtain release 9

'Ribbon of Hope' campaign responds to church arsons 10

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARIES ELKHART LIBRARY JUL 16 '96

Redefining not sin but grace:

We are free to do whatever we want!

That statement scares us as much as it frightened first-century Christians. But this message of total, radical freedom was what Paul gave to the Galatians.

by *Alan Kauffman*

Of all the passionate, ongoing struggles the Christian church has had throughout the centuries, the debate over how to properly respond to the gift of God's grace is like a bare wire; sparks fly, emotions flare up, and religious fervor flames. Like a close-knit family that suddenly becomes warring factions over the free gift of an extravagant inheritance, the family of God continues to battle over how to properly respond to God's free gift of extravagant grace.

Many of the problems addressed in the New Testament epistles were rooted in perverted responses to God's grace. One such response was legalism, which Paul angrily attacks in his letter to the Galatian churches. A brief survey of Paul's New Testament letters reveals a Galatian letter that is unenviably unique. Galatians is Paul's only letter without an expression of thanksgiving. The church had responded to grace legalistically, leaving Paul thankless.

By contrast, Paul thanked even the Corinthians, whom I've often imagined were the

most problematic of all of Paul's converts. Paul's thanks came "because of his [God's] grace given [them] in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:4, NIV). Despite all their problems, Paul could still thank the Corinthians—perhaps because many of their problems grew out of trying to take God's grace to heart and to express it in new and fresh ways. In some cases these expressions of grace proved to be culturally unacceptable, requiring Pauline reproof.

But the Galatian response to grace was different; it left Paul thankless but not speechless. Paul had to respond, for he knew where this legalistic response to grace would lead them. He had been there himself. Paul knew what it was to be bound tight, suffocated, and mummified by religion. Paul had grown up a Jew. He had been drilled in the Old Testament law and the traditions of Judaism by one of the most brilliant and honored scholars of his day, Gamaliel. Paul likely knew every "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" that there was to know. He had zealously attempted to live his life so as to dot every "i" and cross every "t." It was a demanding and rigid life with no room for flexing—a straitjacket religion.

And then one day, on his way to silence more of those "wayward" religious folks in Damascus, Paul (who was then Saul) met and experienced Jesus. His life was radically converted from suffocating to breathing in new life; from mummified to totally free; from blindness to scale-free eyes that could really see. In the days and weeks that followed, Paul became convinced that we can do nothing to save ourselves; one is saved by God's grace alone. With his new eyes, Paul realized that all the laws in Judaism would save no one. They were lifeboats full of holes, because humanity would always fall short of the glory of God by sinning. If keeping the laws and rules was the way to establish and maintain a relationship with God, it would always be a superficial relationship. It could never be an intimate relationship; sin would always create an impassable barrier between us and God.

But when he discovered God's grace and the freedom that comes in not needing to perform, Paul discovered that we are acceptable to God only because God has first freely accepted us and not because we have finally cleaned up our act enough to make ourselves presentable to the Holy One. After having experienced the rigid restrictions of Judaism and then discovering God's grace, Paul's response to his new

Like a close-knit family arguing about an extravagant inheritance, God's children continue to battle over how to properly respond to the free gift of God's grace.

life in Christ must have closely resembled the now-famous line of Martin Luther King Jr., "Free at last, free at last, thank God I'm free at last!"

And what Paul experienced, he proclaimed. He took his freedom message to places like Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Rome, and Galatia, preaching and teaching the wonderful message of grace that had embraced him; "Throw off the shackles of the 'thou shalts' and the 'thou shalt nots'; escape from the confines of culture; be free of the fear of failure." In Galatians 5:1 Paul writes, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." In other words, Christ has set us free from the crushing weight of the law. Freedom in Christ through God's grace was at the heart of the gospel message that Paul preached.

And most of Paul's churches embodied this freeing grace of God. But the Galatian churches were different. Sometime after Paul left Galatia, some religious leaders (likely Jews that had become Christians) moved in and questioned Paul's views and his authority. They introduced a Jewish-Christian theology—a grace-law mix, and they quickly herded all these freedom-loving Christians back into the corral of religious rules and regulations.

Maybe they said things like, "You gullible Galatians! How could you ever fall for Paul and his magical-sounding message of 'all-grace-and-no-law'? Don't you see what he's doing? He's a people-pleaser, just trying to get a following so he can raise some funds for the churches in Jerusalem. Who wouldn't like a guy who comes waltzing into town with a cheap watered-down version of God's demands?"

It must have made a pretty convincing argument, especially since Paul was not around to refute it. Slowly but surely the wave of legalistic preaching and teaching eroded away the grace-filled living; the Galatian churches began succumbing to a shackled, tightly bound, straitjacket religious mix of legalistic grace. The Galatian church became a Christian embryo encased in a thick shell of Jewish legalism. And, to borrow an idea from C. S. Lewis, "You cannot go on indefinitely being an ordinary egg—you must either hatch or go bad." With the shell of Jewish legalism enveloping this young Christian embryo, Paul did not have much time to act. The Galatians were either going to break out of the legalistic shell that bound them, or they would go bad and die and no longer be an authentic Christian congregation.

So Paul sent a letter meant to penetrate the thick suffocating shell. It was a scorching letter to awaken the Galatians from their lethargic, sober piety. It confronted the very heartbeat of the gospel: "Did Jesus come to bind us to countless laws of dos and don'ts, or did Jesus come to set us free from the law?" The answer was obvious to Paul, and he offered arguments in his letter to the Galatians to reinforce the point. Jesus came to offer us a new and different way—the way of grace given to us as a free gift. And when we accept that gift of grace from God through Jesus Christ, we are freed from the law and are no longer bound to the old system.

To experience the radicalness of this message, consider this: with the Spirit of God alive and working in us, we are now free to do whatever we want! That statement most likely scares us as much as it frightened the first-century Jewish Christian leaders. It scares me to make such a liberating statement because total freedom is such a delicate, fragile gift that must be handled with care. It is easily perverted, fumbled, and dropped, leaving little more than shattered fragments of what was meant to be.

But Paul's message was this total, radical freedom. He could state it with such unwavering confidence because when we have been touched by the pure, unconditional love of God and experienced the euphoria of forgiveness from an unmanageable, out-of-control debt, we

Pontius' Puddle

Today the church is not narrowing the list of sins. Instead it is enlarging the definition of sinners who are experiencing the liberating message of God's grace.

as grace-filled people want to do what is radically different from what we would want to do if we were still trying to beat the rule-keeping system or if we were still trying to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. With the Spirit of God in us, producing the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, we are free from the law and can do whatever we want!

Eugene Peterson, in his introduction to the book of Galatians in *The Message*, writes, "When men and women get their hands on religion, one of the first things they often do is turn it into an instrument for controlling others, either putting them or keeping them 'in their place.' The history of such religious manipulation and coercion is long and tedious. It is little wonder that people who have only known religion on such terms experience release or escape from it as freedom. The problem is that the freedom turns out to be short-lived."

As I read our church periodicals each week, I notice a reminiscent longing to return to the good old days of the Mennonite Church, when sin was a sin and we called it so. Embedded in these desires is an accusation that the church is redefining sin these days, that what was a sin in 1956 is no longer a sin in 1996.

While I think I understand how the modern-day church could be interpreted by some as redefining sin, I find part of what the church is about these days is not redefining sin but redefining grace. We are not narrowing the list of sins; in fact, in some ways we are enlarging the list to now include everybody as sinners, not just a select few, as in the past. We are broadening the potential boundaries of God's grace to everyone who has received and who is attempting to live the freeing and liberating message of grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. I rejoice as I see grace being redefined.

Paul was begging the Galatian churches to let freedom ring. We are to continue sounding that message to a world—and sometimes to Christians in bondage. Christianity is not a religion of rules by which to live; it is the experience of a love that liberates us to freely respond to God's gift of grace.

Alan Kauffman is pastor of Glade Mennonite Church in Accident, Md., and this month becomes assistant moderator of Allegheny Conference. He and his wife, Nancy, have two teenage sons, Nate and Matt.

"For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."
—Isaiah 55:12, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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Thank you for the article, ***What's So Special About the Small Church?*** (June 18). The small church is alive and well and growing—although at a slower pace. These churches are about their Father's business, and the worshipers know each other.

Is it not true that every village, every community needs a Mennonite church, even if it is small?

Lewis M. Coss
Hagerstown, Md.

Some Second Thoughts About Nationalism (June 11). As I read J. Robert Charles' "Perspective," I was both dismayed and yet somewhat heartened. He states, "If I understand the grievance correctly, it is that U.S. Mennonites have too fuzzy a sense of national identity to even acknowledge that Mennonites in Canada possess, or might even desire, a markedly different one."

While this statement left me rather unsettled when I first read it, even now I'm not too clear on how I should respond. On the one hand, it is indeed heartening to hear that U.S. Mennonites may listen to the objections and concerns of Canadian Mennonites. On the other, I see Charles' reference to American national identity as being too fuzzy and bewildering.

Having lived in Mennonite communities on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border, I have found that U.S. Mennonites have inherited (quite naturally) from the pervasive American society an assumption that whatever originates in the U.S. should suit the rest of the world. I don't see this assumption as a form of arrogance but as a sign that they don't know of or understand the issues of countries and societies beyond their borders.

Canadian Mennonites, however, reflect the national ethos of Canadian society, and it results in Canadian Mennonites having different perceptions of issues than our American cousins. The Canadian ethos has been one of tolerance, compromise, and mutuality. In our history, Canadians and Mennonites have generally agreed to do what benefits the society as a whole, even if it means some small personal sacrifice. This is in marked contrast to American individualism.

Because of our different national ethos and how we as Mennonites in Canadian society respond to our society and the world, a Canadian identity in the form of a separate Canadian Mennonite conference is necessary in the North American GC-MC integration process.

Bruce Keown
Waterloo, Ont.

I was disturbed to read Dennis Byler referring to Muslims as serving "evil spirits" in his letter (June 25). To me this accusation is dangerously akin to Christians in Europe accusing Jews of kidnapping and killing Christian children as a part of the Passover ritual. That myth lasted in Europe for several centuries and was used as a pretext many times for slaughtering entire Jewish communities.

During my work with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in Hebron, I came into contact with as many varieties of Muslims as there are varieties of Christians. Some were fundamentalists; some were more secular; some were intellectuals; some were "cultural" Muslims. In all cases, as per our CPT mandate, we tried to relate to them as children of God. A lot of our Western misconceptions about Islam were dispelled as a result, and we were able to dispel some misconceptions about Christianity at the same time (e.g., that Christians worship three gods).

Demonizing an entire group of people does not promote the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to look beyond current anti-Muslim propaganda in the West and begin regarding Muslims as human beings, deserving of our respect and our love.

Kathleen Kern
Webster, N.Y.

Thank you, Earl Burkholder, for your letter (June 18) critiquing my letter (May 28), which mentioned the loss of jobs for Oregonians in the logging business through the protection of the spotted owl under the Endangered Species Act.

My original letter attempted to correct the editor's observing a government official taking special notice of Mennonites and their respect for the environment. I mentioned the spotted owl to show how extreme environmentalists can become.

You used my name seven times in arguing that my letter did not express the Christian mission of the church and should not have been published. I used the term "thousands" in speaking of Oregonians who had lost jobs and "millions" when referring to people adversely affected by the lack of low-cost lumber.

The editor deleted part of my letter, which may have given it more meaning. Having been an English teacher, I am sometimes too critical of grammar, spelling, and syntax, but I have a feeling the editor knew where I was "coming from" and did the editing to play fair.

For nearly all my life I have ministered to the poor. One of my biggest concerns is that they be given employment. I have put many men together with the job for which they were skilled. And that was really the bottom line of my first letter.

Norman Teague
Linville, Va.

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Pontius' Puddle

Promoting the reign of God:

My religio-socio-political creed on

Committed followers of Jesus believe the church fails most miserably in its social responsibility if it lets the prophetic biblical voice and the example of God's reign become compromised and weak.

by Theron Schlabach

Recently I got the mood to write out my own personal religio-socio-political creed. That mood came as I was preparing to teach a class in "Citizenship and Conscience" at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, a course using conscientious objection as its case study. I had just reread one of my favorite statements from American Mennonite history: the petition which Mennonites and Dunkers (Brethren) offered to the Pennsylvania government late in 1775, on the eve of the American revolution. Its author was most likely Benjamin Hershey, an immigrant bishop who was moderator of Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

Hershey wrote, "We have dedicated ourselves to serve all Men in every Thing that can be helpful to the Preservation of Men's Lives, but we find no Freedom in giving, or doing, or assisting in any Thing by which Men's Lives are destroyed or hurt. . . ."

Has anyone, of whatever education or sophistication, ever stated a Mennonite socio-political creed more eloquently? My own creed does not. But it is my personal statement, made amid the plurality of voices in the last five years of the twentieth century.

1. I will do no one harm. And do not try to be too sophisticated in applying this principle. Apply it *prima facie*—at the level of the obvious. We do not always know the implications of what we do, and we may inflict harm when we mean to do good.

Indeed, we can inflict harm and do good at the same time, in the same action. Of course for many situations, including war, we can construct arguments that harming someone or some group in a controlled and limited way will, in the end, result in good for many more people—in the "larger good." All of that is logical and in some sense may even be true; but its underlying premise is that we are insightful enough and detached enough to foresee the whole gamut of consequences. That premise is a fatal flaw—often literally fatal.

Since we really are not that insightful and that detached, we need to be extremely cautious and give a very strong benefit of doubt to the *prima facie* considerations. That means being very reluctant to perpetrate obvious, immediate harm in the hope that somehow we will achieve an obscure, distant good. Certainly we must not fall into the trap of doing harm when the victims are real, flesh-and-blood human beings and the imagined beneficiaries are merely verbal abstractions.

The best rule is, "do no one harm." And the best way to apply it is to act on it first and ask the questions later.

2. My orientation is to God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, who proclaimed the coming of God's reign. According to Jesus' most seminal teachings, the central ethic of that reign, after loving God, is love for neighbor and even for the enemy. Such love is the scale against which, ultimately, we measure our concepts of "social responsibility." That is our measure, rather than self-interest, even rather than the corporate self-interest embedded in calculations of "the common good."

For the wisdom we need to make that mea-

surement, we turn first of all to the teachings of Jesus as understood within their entire biblical setting. For discerning that wisdom, we give and take counsel within the church, that is, among those who truly are committed to following Jesus and whom Jesus planted as the harbinger of God's full reign.

3. My commitment is to human beings, not to preserving a nation-state or even a local civic community. Thus if there are times when civic authorities call upon us followers of Jesus to contribute, and we, in our commitment to Jesus' and biblical teachings, refuse for conscience sake, this does not mean that we are slackers. At least we are not slackers if, simultaneous to our refusal, we contribute to individuals and the community by showing love for neighbor and enemy. We may even be contributing to human well-being intrinsically by our refusal. We may do so in ways apart from, perhaps even transcending, the more particular civic entity that is calling for our help.

4. At the same time, I respect government within the framework of God's purposes. Humans need corporate order, and good governments are instruments of such order. God wants justice within the human community, and even imperfect human justice is better than moral chaos for individuals and the community. Good governments are instruments of such justice. God wants humans to work together, to share, to subordinate individual interests for larger human well-being; and we understand that good governments are instruments for increasing human well-being.

Therefore we respect government. Within the larger framework of Christian vocation, we work to sustain and improve government.

This support, however, is qualified by the adjective "good." We give our support when government is indeed working for order, justice, and human welfare. In applying that standard, we accept the fact that government is made up of humans, so we do not apply unrealistic, absolute, or excessively idealistic criteria. Yet we do apply the standard, and at those points at which—in consultation with the Christian brothers and sisters God has provided for our discernment—we perceive that government is not promoting human order, justice, and welfare, we say so. We say so "prophetically." That is, we say so in truth and love, and we say so as a matter of calling government to the purposes for which we understand God intends it. We are not coming to government in the mode of pressure politics for promoting our own favorite causes.

5. Ultimately, my calling is to promote the reign of God, not to try to perfect any one human community or nation-state as the agent of God's righteousness. We Christians find our particular tasks and roles within that larger calling. There may indeed be individuals who, after searching Jesus' teachings, the biblical message, and the counsel of Christian brothers and sisters, will be called to give large amounts of their time, talents, and energies to work within political or other civic-community structures.

The first task of the committed followers of Jesus, however, is to further God's reign, and the primary agent for doing that is the church that God through Jesus planted as harbinger of that reign. So, for human community and human agency, Jesus' followers will be oriented first of all to the church. They will approach socio-political activities as members of the church. They often will exercise their "social responsibility" most directly by building the church, by evangelism and other means, and by working to keep the church faithful to Jesus' and biblical teachings, rather than directly by civic activity.

For they believe that the church, and Christians, fail most miserably in their "social responsibility" if they let the prophetic biblical voice and the example of God's reign become compromised and weak. Since God's reign is the standard for human order, justice, and welfare, the first and most direct "social responsibility" of Jesus' followers is to keep the church effective in its primary task of proclaiming God's reign.

This is my personal religio-socio-political creed—as I've developed it to date. My prayer is that my attitudes, purposes, and actions as a Christian be attuned to God's will and to advancing God's reign. May that be true not only for us individually but also as a corporate body.

Theron F. Schlabach is a member of the College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., and a historian on the faculty of Goshen College. Currently he is Senior Fellow at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. He is also editor of a four-volume history series, The Mennonite Experience in America *(Herald Press).*

Mennonite M & M's

by Steve J. Good

Our world is intense. So are our churches. In the midst of this intensity are ordinary people: you and me. We are people who, recognizing and admitting our foibles, should make each other laugh.

To that end, here is a "sweet" list of the various kinds of *us* there are. Nibble and enjoy.

Macho Mennonites: Talk big but do very little.
Make-do Mennonites: Rarely buy anything new (possessions or concepts) because they figure you can make it work the way it is.
Malcontent Mennonites: Like to grumble about the church and its theology, yet they won't leave. Seem to want to make everyone suffer with them.
Mattress Mennonites: Lack vision—of Jesus, for service, or anything else.
Maytag Mennonites: Never seem to have any problems—until everything quits or falls apart.
Meek Mennonites: Have peacemaking so engraved into them they find any confrontation difficult or impossible.
Mega-Mennonites: See Mennonites as an important part of the Holy Spirit's movement around the world—including the U.S. and Canada.
Mellow Mennonites: Quiet, easygoing, and wonderfully stable.
Mental Mennonites: So committed to the Mennonite church they are defenders of even its weak areas.
Mercedes Mennonites: Exclusive—at least by impression and appearance.
Merely Mennonites: Lack good self-esteem; always on a guilt trip.
Mickey and Minnie Mennonites: Love to wear MCC T-shirts and go to relief sales, largely for the entertainment and the food. Haven't thought about any other purpose.
Mighty Mennonites: Holy Spirit-powered, grounded in the Scriptures, and full of love.
Militant Mennonites: peacekeepers at all costs—no matter who gets hurt.
Milkshake Mennonites: Sweet people, full of flavor from the fruit of the Spirit, nutritionally balanced as they pray and seek God through the Scriptures and through other believers.
Misplaced Mennonites: Raised Mennonite but moved to a locale where there are no Mennonite churches. Never quite lose their Anabaptist views.
Missing Mennonites: Those who have found priorities for their time other than church or kingdom work.
Missionary Mennonites: Those who have a heart for the lost, both overseas and locally.
Misunderstood Mennonites: What many of us are, because of our own lack of clarity about who we are. Consequently we can't explain ourselves very well to others.
Monotone Mennonites: Stuck on the same tune for all discussions and Bible studies: peacemaking, lifestyle, men-women's roles, the Holy Spirit, missions, etc.
Mostly Mennonites: Trying hard to be faithful but make mistakes—and know that others do too. They agree with most Anabaptist theology.
Mountain Mennonites: Lots of ups and downs with the church, but they still love Jesus.
Mouthy Mennonites: Willing to argue a point and critique all ideas harshly, even when they lack a positive alternative to what is being suggested.
Move-over Mennonites: Enthusiastic, but not totally tactful.
Mutilated Mennonites: Quit going to church because of the nit-picking or the politics.

Steve J. Good is pastor of the Wayland Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa. "I have been privileged to be born to Christian parents who also happened to be Mennonites of the MC flavor," he writes. Their parents were Mennonites, and so were their parents.

"I am an ordained minister in the Mennonite Church, and after service in two Mennonite congregations—in Oregon and Ohio—I now serve in a General Conference Mennonite Church. One thing I've decided both our groups have in common: we do not laugh at ourselves enough."

New policy allowing Canadian conscientious objectors in military to be released result of work by MCC Canada

Ottawa, Ont. (MCC Canada)—Shortly after joining the Canadian military in 1987, Brian Palmer became a conscientious objector. He was refused a discharge because, unlike many other Western nations, Canada had no provision for personnel who developed a conscientious objection to war. Despite numerous appeals, Palmer was forced to fulfill his three-year term, although he did obtain noncombatant status.

Today a new policy developed by the Canadian Forces means that conscientious objectors in the military won't have to repeat Palmer's experience. According to the policy, members who have a "sincere objection to participation in war in general or to the bearing and use of arms as a requirement of military service may apply for release as a conscientious objector."

The new policy is the result of Palmer's experience and the work of people such as William Janzen and Chris Derksen Hiebert of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada Ottawa Office and Doug Pritchard, a member of the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada's Peace, Justice, and Social Concerns Commission.

Persuasion. In 1991 Palmer, Janzen, Pritchard, and Chris Derksen Hiebert, then with MCC Ontario, met representatives from the Department of National Defence to try to persuade the government to reinstate the provision, which lapsed in 1952. The Department indicated that it was willing to study the issue; the new policy is the result.

When he joined the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battalion in Calgary, Palmer didn't see a conflict between his faith and being a soldier. But reading about Anabaptist peace theology convinced him that he could no longer fulfill his duties as a soldier. After being discharged with a 5 "C" release—"which means honorable, but we don't want you back," Palmer said in a 1992 interview—he went to Ontario Theological Seminary and Eastern Mennonite Seminary, where he graduated with a master's of divinity degree this spring. He is currently looking for pastoral work.

"I'm quite pleased with the turn of events," says Palmer, a member of the New Covenant Christian Fellowship (Mennonite Brethren) in Toronto. He notes that it isn't often that individuals get to play a role in shaping government policies like this.

According to Karol Wenek, who directs personnel policy for the Department of National Defence, the new policy "is important in terms of having a position from a human rights perspective." He notes that the number of people who will utilize it will likely be very small, "but it will protect the rights of those few."

Making a case for exemption. According to the policy, the objection must be based on "religious or moral study and belief" and not limited to a particular conflict or operation. The claimant must also provide evidence to back up the claim, such as membership in a religious group which opposes war and the claimant's "adherence to such tenets."

Janzen, who directs the MCC Canada Ottawa Office, welcomes the new policy. "Brian's case showed that there was a problem," he says. "Given that many other nations accept the rights of conscientious objectors in the military, it wasn't unreasonable to think that Canada would do the same."

The policy was developed in consultation with a number of agencies, including MCC Canada. Janzen was also surprised and gratified to learn that one of the sources used by the Department of National Defence to do research for the policy was his book *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Doukhabour Communities in Canada.* One part of the book deals with exemptions from military service during the two world wars.

'Bach-to-Bach' concerts. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—Kendra Good Rittenhouse, Ruel Burkholder, Gary Burkholder, and Les Helmuth (left to right), all former members of the Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) Chamber Singers, rehearse for the last concert of EMU's fourth annual Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival. Held June 16-23, the festival opened with a new musical touch—a youth symphony concert directed by Richard Castiglione—and climaxed with a performance by the festival orchestra, choir, and guest soloists of Bach's "St. Matthew's Passion."

The weekend included a commissioned piece performed to the music of Bach by the "thompson & trammell dance quartet"; a one-act opera by the Shenandoah Lyric Theater; several film showings; and a Bach Boutique, an exhibit of handcrafted arts. Other activities included "The Fabulous Musical Zoo," an opportunity for children to touch and play various musical instruments that comprise a modern orchestra, and a Sunday morning Leipzig service with liturgy fashioned after that of the St. Thomas Lutheran Church in Leipzig, Germany, where Bach provided music for each Sunday's service.

Singers and instrumentalists gathered during the week before the festival to practice. Ken Nafziger of the EMU music department directed the program. Next year's Bach Festival, planned for June 15-22, will feature music of Bach and Schubert and include a performance of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."—*Jim Bishop*

'Ribbon of Hope' campaign responds to church burnings

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—A new "Ribbon of Hope" campaign is giving Mennonites the chance to respond to the recent church burnings.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is encouraging congregations and individuals to send green ribbons to the Mennonite Disaster Service rebuilding project of Mt. Zoar Baptist Church, Boligee, Ala.

The green ribbons will be presented to the Mt. Zoar Baptist congregation and local community leaders at the church dedication ceremony scheduled for later this summer. "Congregations are encouraged to give their ribbons the power of faithful action by including educational, worship, and financial components in their response," says Jody Miller Shearer, MCC racism awareness educator. Miller Shearer has suggested the following for incorporating concern for the burned churches in worship services:

- Holding services outdoors in solidarity with those whose churches have been burned.
- Placing a symbol of mourning on the outside of church buildings (a wreath, ribbon, shroud, etc.).
- Placing charred wood in the front of sanctuaries as a reminder of the burnings.
- Meeting with a local congregation from another ethnic group and discussing racism.
- Using an anti-racism youth curriculum in Sunday schools, youth fellowship times, or Bible schools.
- Sending representatives from congregations to the African American Mennonite Association (AAMA) annual meeting on Aug. 9-11 in Hampton, Va., to hear of initiatives against racism within the church.
- Contributing money to the church rebuilding efforts of MDS. By the end of June, only about a third of the projected $50,000 needed to rebuild Mt. Zoar Baptist was received.

The ribbons, along with the name of the congregation, can be mailed directly to MDS, PO Box 341, Boligee, AL 35443. Contributions marked "MDS Ribbon of Hope" can be sent to MDS, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

Illinois churches protest keeping two congregations

Newton, Kan. (MWR)—A failed vote to expel two Illinois Conference congregations because of their positions on homosexuality has prompted more than a dozen other congregations to limit their conference participation.

The Chicago-area African-American and Hispanic clusters have sent letters to the two congregations—Oak Park (Ill.) and Maple Avenue, Waukesha, Wis.—stating they will not participate in fellowship and worship events where the two congregations are present.

The African-American cluster has six congregations and the Hispanic cluster has seven. The Hispanics specifically mentioned they will still participate in conference leadership and business activities such as delegate sessions, said Allan Howe, treasurer for Chicago Area Mennonites.

Trinity Mennonite Church of Morton, Ill., has chosen to maintain its conference membership but abstain from participation, said pastor David Troyer. That includes redirecting financial support that went through conference channels, he said.

Similar action. Troyer said that five or six congregations in downstate Illinois are taking similar steps.

A vote to dismiss Oak Park and Maple Avenue because they accept non-celibate homosexuals as members narrowly failed at the March delegate session.

Mennonite Church moderator Owen Burkholder said he can understand why some congregations want to be a welcoming place for homosexuals. Nevertheless, he said, such congregations' positions run counter to those of the church.

Referring to the 10 Mennonite congregations that have publicly declared acceptance of homosexuals and bisexuals as members through becoming "Publicly Affirming" churches in the Supportive Congregations Network, Burkholder said, "If there are congregations working at this in a way that is different from the denominational position and do so in a public fashion, they are asking us [conference] to join the discussion."

And discussion means discipline, Burkholder said. There "is a will to discipline" among Mennonite Church members, he said. "The question is at what point it should be applied."

The General Board and Council on Faith, Life, and Strategy have drafted the following letter to respond to inquiries about the Mennonite Church's position on homosexuality.

"In an effort to keep this issue from taking an inordinate amount of time at the churchwide level, the General Board and the Council on Faith, Life, and Strategy will respond with copies of the clarification statements that have been made so far [by the General Board in 1991 and by CFLS last November]. More deliberate attention will be given to the issue only if several conferences request it."—*Rich Preheim*

Pacific Southwest focuses on storytelling

San Diego, Calif. (GCMC)—"This assembly is about telling stories. We want to have fun and avoid boring reports," declared moderator Duane Oswald as he opened the second annual assembly for the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference (PSMC) at the San Diego Mennonite Church June 20-23.

That tone was unintentionally aided by the assembly's public address system, which occasionally transmitted rock music from a local radio station.

The theme "Living Faithfully," drawn from 1 Peter 4:7-11, was the basis for the storytelling and for the presentations by Mark Vincent, Elkhart, Ind. As director of The Giving Project, Vincent's job is to help church members become more faithful stewards.

PSMC formed two years ago when the southern portion of the General Conference Pacific District Conference and the Mennonite Church Southwest Mennonite Conference merged. It is divided into three areas—northern California, southern California, and Arizona. Almost 50 churches, with a total membership of about 3,000 members, are part of PSMC.

Delegates approved a budget of $126,000, a 3.5 percent decrease from last year. As part of the approval of the budget, they affirmed an increase from one-third to one-half time for each of the three area ministers. In order to financially support that decision, the conference coordinator position, which was vacant, was eliminated.

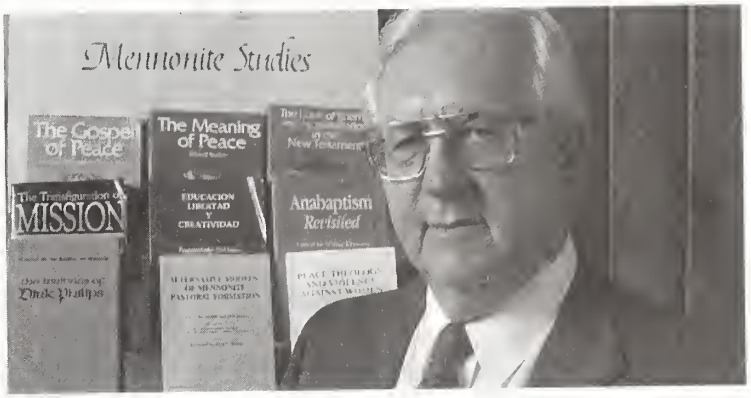
The worship services reflected the diversity present within PSMC. Scripture verses were read in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Dutch.—*Doug Basinger*

Saying he is 'ready to do this,' Bender retires from seminary this summer

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—Stating that "I am ready to do this," Ross T. Bender, former Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) dean, pastor, professor of Christian education, and director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, retired on June 30.

"I plan to do some preaching and teaching, organize my papers, do some travel, do some planned reading, and crack my Latin text from high school," says Bender, in anticipation of his retirement. His "planned reading" includes going back as far as the first piece of printed literature and reading up to modern-day literature; "not everything, just a sampling," he says.

Bender, dean emeritus at AMBS, is completing 26 years of working with AMBS over a period of 34 years, having witnessed the joining of the two seminaries—Goshen Biblical Seminary (GBS) and Mennonite Biblical Seminary—on one campus and eventually the integration of the two seminaries into one. He began in 1962 as a professor of Christian education at GBS, then became dean of both seminaries in 1964, a position he held until 1979.



Ross T. Bender, former professor, pastor, and dean of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, retired on June 30 after 26 years of work for AMBS.

During those early days, the seminaries were located on two different campuses, one in Elkhart and the other on the Goshen College campus. Students at that time were shuttled back and forth between the seminaries. As dean, Bender had an office at both places and "carried an impressive set of keys."

God's presence. Bender is known as a gentle, gracious, and brilliant man with a delightful sense of humor. "He has character that is built on faith," says Erick Sawatzky, a former student in Bender's early days as dean and current director of field education at AMBS. "He has such maturity and vision . . . depth of character that is rooted in deep humility."

For Willard M. Swartley, current AMBS dean, Bender is a man of great wisdom. "He thinks of things at the right time. He can articulate clearly and persuasively what he wants to say while remaining sensitive to human relations," Swartley says.

Bender says he keenly experienced God's presence in 1990 prior to the Mennonite World Conference in Winnipeg. This conference was the conclusion of six years as president of Mennonite World Conference for Bender. A month prior to the conference, Bender received a serious heart diagnosis. At this time he also received a vision.

"It was a vision of an angel who said, 'Come with me,' " he says. "My wife [Ruth] asked if this meant to come to heaven, but no, it meant 'Peace.' I clearly understood that I could now set aside all of my administrative responsibilities."

Immediately following those sessions Bender had open heart surgery. Nevertheless, he cites the opening event of that Assembly as a highlight of his career: "All the delegates came across the platform, and I got to greet them and be with them for some of the following days."

'Bookend' to his career. Bender has written and edited numerous books, including *The People of God* and *Christians in Families*.

Bender ended his work at AMBS by organizing a seminar on congregational studies. The seminar looked at ways for seminary faculty and conference leaders to better understand congregations.

"It is a wonderful bookend to my career," Bender says. "It's all been about seminaries and congregations."

—June Mears Driedger

Ohio, Central District meeting centers on integration

Bluffton, Ohio (GCMC)—Meeting jointly for the first time since 1993, the Central District Conference and Ohio Conference held their annual conference assembly June 21-23 at Bluffton College. Approximately 500 people attended the event, which focused on the integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church.

What will be stored. Delegates heard a report from members of the Integration Committee for the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church.

The Integration Committee is the architectural firm that has been appointed to design this new denomination, said Dorothy Nickel Friesen, committee member and pastor of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton. "We will hire contractors—that is, program boards, commissions, agencies, committees, and task forces to do the work of deciding what kind of rooms are needed, what kind of furniture will be kept, what will be new, what will be stored, what will be destroyed," she added.

"Our task as an integration committee is to listen to all the interested members of this family who will be moving into this new denominational house," Friesen said.

Delegates reviewed a short polity statement drafted by leaders of the East Central States Inter-Mennonite Council. The document "addresses the way we order our common life" and describes "our common understanding about the relationship between local congregations and area conferences."

In separate Ohio conference sessions, delegates approved adoption of the revised constitution and approved the reports as presented in the annual report.

Approximately 100 youth and their sponsors attended the Youth, Leadership, Education, and Development (Y-Lead) program, which was held at the same time as the conference assembly.

The event was designed to train youth to be leaders as well as to train sponsors to recognize and nurture the leadership gifts of youth.

—Mary Pannabecker Steiner

What to do with an old building?

Japanese Mennonites recycle mission center

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—What happens to buildings and properties bought and built by mission organizations once the organization no longer needs them?

In the case of the old Fukuzumi Center in Sapporo, Japan, the church rebuilds and rededicates the building to a new use.

On June 30, the Japan Mennonite Christian Church Conference (JMCCC) celebrated and dedicated the new Fukuzumi Mennonite Center in Sapporo. Originally built by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) as a hostel for children of mission workers studying in the city, the building was turned over to the JMCCC in the early 1980s when the responsibility for church leadership moved from MBM to the Japanese conference.

• • •

The building was used as a boarding house and meeting place for nearly eight years as the church discussed how to best use the aging structure. Finally, they tore down the original structure and built the new center on the grounds.

"This is a good example of taking former mission property and converting it to current conference needs," says Dale Schumm, MBM director for Asia and the Middle East. Schumm says the previous building was not suited to the needs of the church and that the current building should "serve them well for a long time to come."

About 400 members make up the Japanese Mennonite Christian Church Conference. The JMCCC built the structure without any financial assistance from the North American church or its agencies.

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The new Fukuzumi Mennonite Center plays host to visiting church guests and provides apartments and rooms for permanent residents. A large meeting room on the second floor is used regularly by the Grace Mennonite congregation for its Sunday morning worship. The Mennonite conference uses one room for meetings and theological education workshops.—*Christy Risser*

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- **Intervention planned.** Intervention procedures for cases of clergy sexual misconduct are being planned by a joint Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church committee in the East Central States. An 800 number to report charges of abuse by a pastor and a quick response by an investigative team upon receiving a signed complaint are being organized for the region that includes Illinois, Indiana-Michigan, and Ohio conferences. A training event for conference officials, initial contact persons, and investigation team members will be held Sept. 5-7.

- **News on MDS scheduled.** Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) will be featured on a segment of the CBS news program *48 Hours* scheduled for July 18. MDS workers were interviewed at the site of their work at the Mt. Zoar Baptist Church in Boligee, Ala., where arson destroyed the church building.

- **Soccer team plays in Italy.** A 13-member soccer team played seven games in eight days in Italy as part of a Partners in Mission trip, sponsored by Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions. The team played soccer with Italian Mennonites during their trip after attending an orientation held in Harrisonburg, Va.

- **Seminary builds.** SEMILLA, a Central American Anabaptist seminary in Guatemala City, has begun the first stage of its building plans for new offices and classrooms. The SEMILLA board of directors hope to raise at least half of the estimated $240,000 necessary and to begin construction by September. They also expect volunteer teams from Central and North America to help in construction.—*Mennonite World Conference*

- **CPT Sunday planned.** Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is inviting congregations to celebrate CPT Sunday on Oct. 27 or another Sunday in October. A CPT Sunday packet will be available in August from CPT at PO Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680.

- **People garden with MCC.** Eleven people are serving with the Canada Summer Native Gardening program of Mennonite Central Committee this year. Three are affiliated with the Mennonite Church: Christina Stoltzfus of Atglen, Pa.; Jon Umble of Coatesville, Pa.; and Jennie Krueger of Wheatley, Ont.

- **Taiwanese commission worker.** Mennonites in Taiwan have sent their first mission worker overseas. Ying-Kuei Yeh is on a three-year assignment with a Christian drug rehabilitation center in northern Thailand. The Hsi-Tun Mennonite Church in Taichung has assumed full financial responsibility for her support.

- **Correction.** A Mennoscope item in the July 2 issue of *Gospel Herald* incorrectly stated that Mennonite Board of Missions will give up to $54,000 for the building of a seminary in Benin. It should have read that the money will be raised by North American volunteers, who will pay their expenses and raise funds to support land, construction, and administrative costs.

- **New appointments:**

Dawn Austin, softball coach, Goshen (Ind.) College.

Jeff Wintermote, youth leader, Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, Pa.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Tim Schrag will be installed as lead pastor of the Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.) on Sept. 15.

- **Coming events:**

Gathering of pastors of larger and multiple-staff Mennonite congregations, Cross Wind Conference Center, Hesston, Kan., Sept. 9-11. Pastoral staff of Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, and Mennonite Brethren churches will participate. More information is available from David Mann at 316 327-4885; email: dwmann@aol.com

- **New books:**

Mennonite Women of Lancaster County, a story in photographs from 1855-1935, was written and compiled by Joanne Hess Siegrist. The collection of photographs includes background text and details about the contents of each photograph. Available from Good Books, 717 768-7171.

- **New resources:**

Peace Heroes is the new five-session *Fastlane* Bible studies for junior high youth. Written by Christine Neufeld, the sessions include lessons on Jesus, Mother Teresa, Francis of Assisi, John Perkins, and Muriel Lester. Available from Faith & Life Press at 800 743-2484.

- **Job openings:**

German-Spanish teacher, Bethany Christian School, Goshen, Ind. Single full-time position or two part-time positions for 1996-97 school year. Call Allan Dueck at 219 534-2567.

Middle school instructor, Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore. Responsibilities include instruction in language arts, social studies, Bible, health and physical education, and general math for grades 7-8. More information from Eric Martin at 503 363-2000.

Office manager, Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich. Full-time, salaried position opens July 15. More information is available from Dana Sommers at 616 651-2811.

NEW MEMBERS

Central, Archbold, Ohio: Micah Sensenig and Brian Short.

Community Mennonite Fellowship, Corning, N.Y.: Bob Lightfoot, Debbie Lightfoot, Eric Kirby, Nancy Kirby, Lavendar DeMonstoy, Bill Michaloski, and Daniel Michaloski.

Community Mennonite Fellowship, Moorefield, Ont.: Dan Brown and JoAnne Brown.

East Goshen, Goshen, Ind.: Greg and Bethany Shank, Keith and Pam Miller, and Henry and Esther Yoder.

East Union, Kalona, Iowa: Zac Miller.

Evanston, Ill.: Benjamin Horst, Susan Harrison, and Erin Yoder.

First, Kitchener, Ont.: Kendra Bender, Jillian Burkhardt, Krista Burkhardt, Tanya Dyck Steinman, Don Dyck Steinman, Curtis Johnstone, Nadine Moyer, Maria Sandoval, and Nadine Moyer.

Gingrich, Lebanon, Pa.: Daisha Copenhaver, Maria Hoover, Randy Keener, Jared Kling, Krystal Kling, Derrick Martin, Chad Nolen, Greg Snader, and Kristofer Stichter.

Holly Grove, Westover, Md.: Gabriel Stuckey, Roy Thomas, and Betty Thomas.

Line Lexington, Pa.: Jamie Delp, Tiffany Rush, Richard G. Shriver, Jr., Beth C. Shriver, Art Detweiler, and Irene Detweiler.

Maple Grove, Hartville, Ohio: Jim and Lovina Schrock, Ron and Wanda Embleton, Barbara and Danny Volk, and Jon, Vi, Katie, and Lydia Dutcher.

Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.: Mary Whaler, Victor Buckwalter,and Christina Buckwalter.

Perkasie, Pa.: Judy Clemens Smucker, Steve Clemens Smucker, Fini Garis, Keith Kratz, and Karen Soltys.

Prairie Street, Elkhart, Ind.: Jeff Pawlak.

Sharon, Plain City, Ohio: Gwen Troyer, Mark Bailey, Roxanne Walk, Doug and Susan Alt, Richard Miller, Enola Miller, Philip Whitley, and Sarah Yoder.

South Union, West Liberty, Ohio: Neil Slonecker, H. Wells Near, and Joanne Near.

BIRTHS

Baer, Karla and Gareth, Salem, Ohio, Lauren Elizabeth (first child), June 5.

Bontrager, Marti and Duane, Ashley, Mich., Leah Elaine (first child), June 15.

Brost, Tonya Kanagy and Jeffrey, Billings, Mont., Kimball Jeffrey (first child), June 13.

Chaffinch, Carol Benner and Michael, Greenwood, Del., Matthew Drexel (third child), June 15.

Crider, Kathy Sollenberger and Arlan, Chambersburg, Pa., Andrea Danae (third child), May 29.

Eby, Jayne Oyer and Duane, Goshen, Ind., Colton Duane (first child), June 19.

Gehman, Carol Miller and Michael, Bally, Pa., Damaris Rose (second child), Nov. 14, 1995.

Gerber, Linda Stacy and Paul, Wellesley, Ont., Taylor Lynn (second child), May 6.

Gingrich, Bonnie Miller and Mike, Bristol, Ind., Jacob Clayton (second child), May 15.

Kaati, Charity and Vincent Clay, Columbus, Ohio, Victor (first child), Feb. 15.

King, Karen Lee and John, Wauseon, Ohio, Elias Lawrence (fourth child), June 25.

Mark, Summer Quimby and Scott, Elkhart, Ind., Anne Marie (first child), May 13.

From Pennsylvania in 1996 A.D. to Antioch in 49 A.D. *Blooming Glen, Pa.*—Carol Stevens, "bakery shopkeeper" for the "Antioch A.D. 49" summer Bible school coordinated by Blooming Glen and Perkasie Mennonite churches, invites children to taste pita, anise-spiced flat bread, matzoh, and heavenly teacakes. For three days in June, children in kindergarten through grade six "lived" in tents in Tarsus, Casarea, Corinth, Philippi, and other cities that Paul visited on his missonary journeys. Each day the children went to the well for water, prepared bread for meals, and enjoyed a letter from Paul delivered to their "front door." They made paper, musical instruments, clothes, and pottery as apprentices in various shops. Members of the congregations dressed as tax collectors, beggars, and Roman soldiers met the children in the marketplace, and children watched live dramas based on the life of Paul. More than $600 received in offerings will contribute to the translation of the Jubilee Christian education curriculum into Spanish. Some 100 adults helped with the Bible school.—*submitted by Jody Moyer*

Miller, Mary Jo Byler and Mose, Hartville, Ohio, Jared Andrew (third child), May 25.

Nacarella, Donna A. Cory and Lawrence P., Perkasie, Pa., Regan Cory (first child), June 16.

Nouri, Mary Sprunger and Rashid, Harrisonburg, Va., Abraham Sprunger (first child), June 27.

Paul, Karen Schoenly and Stephen, Bethlehem, Pa., Aidan Duane (first child), June 16.

Pinchak, Lisa Moyer and Robert, Princess Anne, Md., McKayla Christine (second child), April 29.

Sauder, Cindy Yoder and Kurtis, Charlottesville, Va., Zachary Robert (first child), June 24.

Shank, Bethany Miller and Greg, Goshen, Ind., Katie Jo (first child), May 16.

Short, Lavonne and Darrell, Goshen, Ind., Lindsey Joy (second child), June 1.

Shrock, Amy Raber and James, Uniontown, Ohio, Chloe Elizabeth (second child), May 1.

Snyder, Kim Shaffer and Dean, Sarasota, Fla., Bryce Alan (first child), May 25.

Stauffer, Marcia Zeiset and Duane, Mount Joy, Pa., Adrian Nicole (first child), May 31.

Wiesman, Kimberly, Millersburg, Ind., Morgan Paige (first child), June 24.

Woolschlager, Christina Raymond and Scott, Lowville, N.Y., Megan Elizabeth (first child), May 29.

Yoder, Linda Horner and Brian, Holsopple, Pa., Rebecca Lynn (first child), April 24.

MARRIAGES

Bauman-Good: Tamira Bauman, Telford, Pa. (Line Lexington), and Robert Dean Good, Lansdale, Pa. (Souderton), June 15, by Lowell H. Delp and Kirk Hanger.

Blauvelt-Boller: Andy Blauvelt, Washington, Iowa, and Kim Boller, Kalona, Iowa (East Union), June 22, by Michael Loss and Fred Bickhart.

Cline-Wenger: Eric Cline, Bridgewater, Va. (Harrisonburg), and Sandra Wenger, Harrisonburg, Va. (Harrisonburg), June 22, by Wayne North and Paul Bailey.

Eichelberger-Finney: Diana Eichelberger, Hagerman, Idaho (Filer), and Hiram Finney, Sabetha, Kan., June 8, by George Leppert.

Garcia-Mendoza: Sara Elizabeth Garcia, Goshen, Ind. (Clinton Frame), and Jose Mendoza, Ligonier, Ind., June 29, by Israel S. Garcia and Robert L. Shreiner.

Glick-Nunemaker: Milt Glick, Goshen, Ind. (First), and Stacy Nunemaker, Goshen, Ind. (Holdeman), June 22, by Dave Heusinkveld.

Harris-Swartley: Sandra L. Harris, Perkasie, Pa. (Baptist), and Michael C. Swartley, Perkasie, Pa. (Blooming Glen), June 22, by Richard A. Harris.

Hartrick-Miller: Rachel Hartrick and Craig Miller, Dalton, Ohio (Kidron), June 22, by Bruce Friesen.

Hilty-Miller: Janelle Hilty, Goshen, Ind. (Crown Hill), and Rob Miller, Goshen, Ind., June 1, by Dave Heusinkveld.

Hofstetter-McAllister: Pamela Hofstetter, Wooster, Ohio (Moorhead), and Todd McAllister, Columbus, Ohio (Agape Community Fellowship), May 25, by Randy Murray and Terry Rohrer.

Kanagy-Nitta: Brian Kanagy, New Orleans, La. (Belmont), and Yuko Nitta, Hiratsuka, Kanagawa, Japan, June 22, by Duane Beck.

King-Musselman: Kirby King, Lederach, Pa. (Souderton), and Erika Musselman, Souderton, Pa. (Souderton), June 29, by Gerald A. Clemmer, Linford King, and Russell Musselman.

Miller-Musser: Rick Miller, Princess Anne, Md. (Holly Grove), and Charity Musser, Pocomoke City, Md. (Holly Grove), May 25, by Cleo Koop.

Rush-Tufton: Kenneth T. Rush, Perkasie, Pa. (Blooming Glen), and Tricia E. Tufton, Sellersville, Pa., June 23, by Truman H. Brunk, Jr., and Robert R. Tufton.

Skinner-Snyder: Elizabeth Skinner, Archbold, Ohio (Zion), and Dave Snyder, Portland, Ore. (Portland), June 1, by Bob Kenner.

Smith-VerSchneider: Susanne Smith, Croghan, N.Y., and Dana VerSchneider, Croghan, N.Y., May 17, by Lester Bauman.

Weaver-Yoder: Jennifer Weaver, Shreve, Ohio (Wooster), and Douglas Yoder, Streetsboro, Ohio (Aurora), May 25, by Wayne A. Nitzsche.

Yoder-Zimmerman: Karmen Yoder, Akron, Pa. (Akron), and Philip Zimmerman, Lititz, Pa. (Akron), June 8, by Urbane Peachey.

DEATHS

Gascho, Ida Litwiller, 90, New Hamburg, Ont. Born: June 20, 1905, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to John R. and Magdalena Schwartzentruber Litwiller. Died: June 10, 1996, New Hamburg, Ont. Survivors—daughter: Viola Dorsch; sister: Alice Bender; 11 grandchil-

dren, 17 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Norman Gascho (husband) and Reta Baechler (daughter). Funeral and burial: June 12, St. Agatha Mennonite Church, by Brent Kipfer and Gerald Schwartzentruber.

Glick, John L., 79. Born July 28, 1916, Morgantown, Pa., to Samuel and Salinda Glick. Died: March 2, 1996, Woodchoppertown, Pa., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Ida Kurtz Glick; children: Karl G., John Andrew, David D., Lois Ann Hostetter, Rebecca Benner; foster children: Mac Bhuta, Sam Bhuta; 18 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Ark Bible Chapel. Funeral: March 6, Oley Mennonite Church, by Jeff Ludwig, Dan Willman, and Nathan Stoltzfus.

He was ordained August 18, 1946, and pastored at Oley Mennonite Church and Ark Bible Chapel.

Hooley, Fannie Christina, 99, West Liberty, Ohio. Born: Sept. 12, 1896, Logan County, Ohio, to David B. and Sarah Yoder. Died: June 10, 1996, West Liberty, Ohio. Survivors—children: Gayler, Margery Headings, Mary Strayer; sister: Clara Hostetler; 8 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: John D. Hooley (husband) and Richard and David (sons). Funeral: June 13, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, by Larry Augsburger. Burial: Fairview Cemetery.

Jutzi, Kevin James, 40, Kitchener, Ont. Born: May 17, 1956, Kitchener, Ont., to Merlin and Grace Bast Jutzi. Died: June 10, 1996, Kitchener, Ont., of cystic fibrosis. Survivors—wife: Christine Jacob Jutzi; brother and sister: Calvin, Robin Coupland-Jutzi. Funeral and burial: June 13, First Mennonite Church, by Rudy Baergen.

Martin, Lydia R. Hess, 87, Marion, Pa. Born: July 12, 1908, Marion, Pa., to A. L. and Hettie K. Horst Hess. Died: May 20, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa. Survivors—stepchildren: Leon and Iva Martin, Miriam Oberholzer; sister: May C. Baer; 12 step-grandchildren, 49 step-great-grandchildren, 12 step-great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ira D. Martin (husband). Funeral: May 23, Thomas L. Geisel Funeral Home, Inc., by Merle Cordell and Alvin Kanagy. Burial: Marion Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Miller, Robert W., 65, Akron, Pa. Born: Aug. 8, 1930, Akron, Pa., to Orie O. And Elta Wolf Miller. Died: June 17, 1996, Akron, Pa. Survivors—wife: Jean Carper Miller; children: Jeffrey C., James C., Jennifer Styan, Joan Block; brother: John W.; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: June 21, Akron Mennonite Church, by Beryl Jantzi. Burial: Wolf Cemetery.

Myers, Samuel Lloyd, 81, Perkasie, Pa. Born: Sept. 26, 1914, Danboro, Pa., to Isaac M. and Hannah G. Leatherman Myers. Died: June 12, 1996, Souderton, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Edna Yothers Myers; children: David, Anna Marie, Ruth; brother: Paul L.; 2 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 15, Perkasie Mennonite Church, by Craig Pelkey Landes, David Miller, and Harold Kreider.

Nelson, Welma, 83, Goshen, Ind. Born: Dec. 31, 1912, Wayland, Iowa, to Joseph and Barbara Rich Graber. Died: June 4, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Boyd Nelson; children: Ben, Paul, Barbara Gingerich; brothers and sisters: Raymond, Willis, and Virgil R. Graber, Rachel Wyse, Berniece Roth, Beulah Swartzendruber, Lois Swartzendruber, Sara Frederick; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: June 8, College Mennonite Church, by Nancy Kauffmann and Virgil Gerig. Burial: Prairie Street Mennonite Church Cemetery.

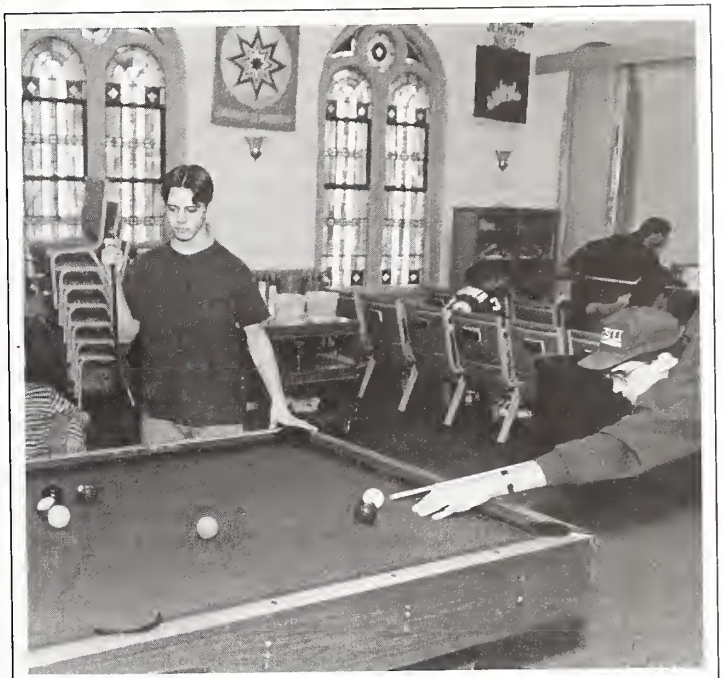
Schrock, Gertie, 93, South Hutchinson, Kan. Born: Oct. 20, 1902, Lake Charles, La., to David C. and Fannie Miller Schrock. Died: June 25, 1996, South Hutchinson, Kan. Funeral and burial: June 28, Yoder Mennonite Church, by Dan Kauffman and Peter Hartman.

Steider, Keith E., 32, LaGrange, Ind. Born: May 5, 1964, LaGrange, Ind., to Richard and Roberta Troyer Steider. Died: June 25, 1996, Elkhart, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—brothers: Douglas, Ronald. Funeral and burial: June 28, Shore Mennonite Church, by Carl Horner and Ralph Wenger.

Wideman, Lorne H., 79, New Hamburg, Ont. Born: July 24, 1916, Markham, Ont., to Albert and Magdelena Hoover Wideman. Died: May 9, 1996, New Hamburg, Ont. Survivors—wife: Marion Grove Wideman; children: Candie Brubacher, Beverly MacDonald, Keith; sisters: Anna Wideman, Ella Grove; 6 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Brussels Mennonite Fellowship. Funeral and burial: May 11, Wideman Mennonite Church, by Gerald Schwartzentruber and Lawrence Burkholder.

Yantzi, Connie F. Fitzgerald, 40, Ontario. Born: Sept. 30, 1955, Adrian, Mich., to Joseph and Inez Fitzgerald. Died: May 9, 1996, Kitchener, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Duane Yantzi; children: Rachel Marie, James Joseph Fitzgerald; brother and sister: Thomas Fitzgerald, Kathy Bailey. Funeral: May 13, Wellesley Mennonite Church, by Ray Martin and Gerald Schwartzentruber. Burial: Maple View Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Yoder, Kenneth E., 45, Belleville, Pa. Born: Oct. 25, 1950, Belleville, Pa., to Alpheus J. and Ruth N. Hartzler Yoder. Died: June 14, 1996, Belleville, Pa. Survivors—father; wife: Elsie J. Yoder; children: Lyle J., Lisa M.; brothers and sisters: Gerald L., Janet Shetler, Rita, Carol, Arlene Redcay; 3 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 16, Locust Grove Mennonite Church, by Max Zook, Erie Renno, and Elam Glick.



From pool games to trust. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Ryan Grove (right) from Greencastle, Pa., shoots pool with Russell at "The Bridge," a youth center operated by the Hampden Mennonite Church in their multi-purpose sanctuary in Reading, Pa. Grove is a member of a Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team that helps out at the youth center. Not everyone in the congregation was sure that the church should rip out pews and move in pool tables three years ago. "But we had a growing burden for youth from the only high school in the city right across the street from the church," says pastor Ken Eberly. The center operates in the transformed sanctuary for two hours each afternoon. In addition to recreation activities, 50-60 young people regularly sign in for the daily Bible studies, says Eberly. "I am thrilled with the relationships that are being established with local youths. The kids have a high level of trust in the YES team and are unusually interested and receptive. We have seen a few commitments to faith, but I believe we are on the verge of a major breakthrough into the community."

Newspaper

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The kind without wings

"Have you ever seen an angel?"

My mother says she didn't know what to say when my great-aunt Sarah nonchalantly tossed that question at her. Aunt Sarah said it as if she were inquiring whether the peas in the garden survived the last storm or if it was time to take the tuna casserole out of the oven.

"Well, I . . . ," Mom began to answer but my aunt interrupted. "I've never seen the kind with wings," Aunt Sarah said resolutely. "But I know I've seen some angels."

Had Aunt Sarah asked me, I'd have told her I've seen a lot of angels recently, mostly in card and gift stores: dimpled cherubs and porcelain-skinned blond figures smiling out from a froth of wings and clouds and lace. It's as if, by papering angels across cards and wrapping paper, we're trying to bring back the biblical era in which angels enter and exit history's stage like regular, scheduled actors. Enter: angel of God to the Israelites; seraphim to Isaiah the year King Uzziah died. Enter: angel of the Lord to Joseph; angels to the garden tomb.

Angels certainly don't play bit parts either in the Bible—they are essential to the plots of the stories they enter. They lead people blinded by routine into new territory—like going ahead of the children of Israel escaping out of Egypt. They show people how to revere God—like covering their faces and feet with their wings in the temple of God, as Isaiah describes. They convince people to do crazy things—like taking the long way home so a newborn baby doesn't get killed by a king. And perhaps, most delightfully, angels play resurrection jokes on the world—like shocking the guards at Jesus' empty tomb.

But I think angels do still peek into our world—and I'm not referring to the stranger who rescues people and then is gone without tracks or the white-robed visitors some claim to see at night. I don't doubt the truth of these stories, but I agree more with my aunt Sarah. I've seen the kind of angels without wings, without trumpets, without even the ability to disappear when they've done their job. The angels I see come with last names and dirt under their fingernails.

That is, if angels lead people into unknown and promised landscapes, then I've seen them. They show us that women in the Mennonite church can minister and lead with conviction, authority, and sensitivity. They show us that people of color can take the church into a land flowing with the milk and honey of reconciliation.

If angels show us how to worship God with covered eyes and feet, then I've seen them. They lead congregations into prayer and song in ways that inspire awe of the Creator and that remind us of the irony of our place in God's temple and at the hem of God's robe.

If angels convince people to do crazy things, then I've seen them. They tell us that taking a route of simplicity and sacrifice may actually make more sense than walking the seemingly logical path toward financial security and societal success. They tell us that giving a percentage of our institutional budgets to agencies in the two-thirds world may be more sane than keeping our money to ourselves. They convince us that helping offenders meet their victims face-to-face can be more logical than the age-old act of slamming someone into prison.

And if angels play wonderful, life-giving jokes on the world, then I've seen them. They show us that closing crack houses in Washington, D.C., writing letters to officials of Taco Bell that protest the use of violent toys in children's meals, and volunteering vacation time to raise up burned churches are actually acts of resurrection. They play jokes of life on the government by refusing to pay war taxes and then giving more to mission and service agencies than the government would even require for itself.

The angels I see these days, like the ones in the Bible, certainly don't sit around like the cherubs that cup their faces in their hands—groomed, innocent, and a little bored. Rather, they lead us into places we're terrified of, show us how to worship the great Mystery, convince us to do things that don't compute, and play impractical jokes on the guards of death.

So, Aunt Sarah, the answer is yes. I know I've seen angels, too—some of the kind with wings, some of the kind without.—*vsw*

July 23, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Author Elaine Maust with her husband Duane and children, Christine and Nathan. "Though many questions related to my call remain, one thing I have not questioned: God has convinced me he loves me."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Randall J. Roth & Ryan Ahlgrim:
The top 10 Mennonite bumper stickers 5

Phil Lindell Detweiler:
What we can learn about victory from a Beninese village 6

New general secretary ordained at Allegheny Conference meeting . . . 9

Indiana-Michigan passes statement on membership, homosexuality 10

How my God met me (12):

She said 'yes'! She said 'yes'!

In one moment, a lifetime of uncertainties and years of tears and struggles came down to a simple question. God had called me. What would I answer?

by Elaine Maust

The book in my hand slid into my lap. I looked out the window into the clouds that floated by as the small plane swam through the ocean of sky. I love to fly, but on this trip to the South Bend, Ind., airport in 1994, it was not the view of the Indiana countryside in miniature that had my attention. I was wrestling with God in my turbulent heart. How would I respond to God's call to ministry?

I first experienced that call as a 12-year-old child. Late one night I unmistakably heard God say, "I want you to become a missionary." I knelt beside the sofa in the family living room and promised I would do whatever God asked. That experience filled me with wonder and excitement—and a few questions.

The next morning, I tapped the shoulder of the boy that sat in the desk in front of me in the small Mennonite school we attended. "Have you ever heard of a Mennonite woman preacher?" I asked. He thought a minute, shrugged, and said, "No, I guess not."

My teenage and early adult years were filled

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Since I've answered, the struggle is over. I have not become wildly successful in my attempt at following the call, but I have peace with God as I do the best I can.

with opportunities to serve God. At Rosedale (Ohio) Bible Institute and in the churches I attended, I had all the opportunities I could hope for to learn and teach and speak and sing and listen and write. During that time, friends and sometimes even people I did not know very well would come up to me and say, "God is calling you to something special." Putting my finger to my lips, I would say, "Shhhh, it's a secret."

One afternoon in the late 1980s, as I put away the dishes I had just washed, I tried to decide what to do with my life. "Here's what to do," I told myself. "Why don't you make a list of all the things you like to do?" So standing between the kitchen table and the china cupboard, I made the list in my head: studying the Bible, visiting people in the hospital, speaking to groups, writing, teaching. Looking over my mental list, I was not sure I liked the direction I was headed. I got busy finishing the dishes.

By the 1990s, the call was not a secret anymore. It became a struggle. Over and over I promised I would do anything God wanted me to do. I was offered and took more responsibilities in preaching and leadership through Clinical Pastoral Experience (CPE), as an elder at Jubilee Mennonite Church, and as stewardship minister for Gulf States Mennonite Conference. But all the time I kept up a running argument in my heart with God.

If God had called me to be a missionary, I wondered, why was I so ineffective at bringing people to him and the church? Sick-hearted, I set aside a couple of months for prayer for forgiveness.

One steamy afternoon near Vicksburg, Miss., as I was driving along with tears streaming down my face, I told God that I was a failure and asked for forgiveness. I told God how much I loved him and how sorry I was that I had not been able to bring more people to know him as I did. I prayed, "Oh God, what are your words to me?" I heard God say, "Pull off the road." I braked and bumped onto the shoulder of the road, stopped the car, and began to feel a little funny. "God, what is it?" I asked. "I feel kind of stupid here." Just as clearly as if someone spoke, I heard God say, "I have called you to ministry."

I had several of these unexpected encounters in which I felt God restating the call. I kept them to myself, assuming that if I had heard correctly, this call would be confirmed by my faith community. If close friends inquired why I was not pursuing a career as a minister, I explained my great confidence in the voice of God through the people of God.

Despite the reassurances of God and my church, for years my journal was sprinkled with arguments, misgivings, and confusion. Sometimes the entries were sad, sometimes even angry. "How can I do this God? What does your call mean? What will it mean for our family? How could you want me?" And, "Excuse me, God, but in case you did not notice, I am uneducated. I am a woman. This just will not work." At the same time, I experienced the steady reassurance that God was calling me through mystical experiences and my brothers and sisters in the church.

My years of struggle culminated that morning on the trip to South Bend. There I was, an ordinary woman from Mississippi, a farmer's wife and the mother of two junior high students on an airplane over Indiana, wrestling with God.

"It doesn't make sense to call me, God," I said. "Don't you know these things are not allowed? I love you, I love the church, but I don't have any interest in banging on locked doors."

For some reason as we approached the South Bend airport, I began to realize this "call to ministry business" was reduced to a decision. It became completely clear that I must respond to God with a "yes" or a "no." God had waited long enough.

I remembered how I had felt almost 20 years earlier when Duane asked me to marry him. As we walked through the woods talking, I knew the question that we had talked and thought about for years was coming. I would have to say "yes" or "no." The trees began spinning and pressed in on me. I knew that I could not possibly understand what "yes" would mean. But I knew Duane loved me, so that's what I said.

Now as South Bend came into view below me, I realized my lifetime of uncertainties and years of tears and struggle came down to a simple question. God had called me. Would I say "yes" or "no"?

I said "yes."

And then, as the wheels touched down on the runway, I had a vision. I saw God, dancing, running around heaven, waving his arms and hollering, "She said 'yes'! She said 'yes'!"

I wanted to jump out of that bumpy little plane and run around the airport hollering, "I said 'yes'! I did it! I said 'yes'!" But I stayed

obediently clipped into my seat, grinning from ear to ear.

I have thought often—and always with a smile—of that day and my private moment of celebration with the God of heaven.

Since I said "yes," the struggle is over. I still have no idea why God would call a common farm girl from Mississippi to join his work. I don't even understand why he would love me at all! I am still a woman. I still have no degree. I still often feel like a failure. I still don't know how others will respond to these strange experiences. But my struggle is over, and I am at peace. God called me, and I did what the church has always taught me to do. I said "yes."

I have not become wildly successful in my attempt at following the call since that day on the airplane. I did not expect that to happen, and it has not. But I have peace with God as I just do the best I can to serve him and the church. I have new freedom and power as I do the things I have always loved to do and felt comfortable doing. After all, God did not choose me because I was such a genius at ministry. It was an act of grace.

Just as I struggled for years over this call, Gulf States Mennonite Conference struggles with the question of whether or not it is appropriate to credential women for pastoral ministry. Given the time it took for me to resolve this question, I do not rush them to a decision. These people, along with my family, nurtured me to faith. They offered me opportunities to use my gifts. It would seem most ungracious to rise up and tell them what they must now do for me.

I have decided, instead, to submit myself to their decision on this matter and am happy to serve the Lord and them as they see fit. This decision is made easier because I know the good-hearted people with whom these decisions rest. They are my friends who have eaten in our home and who have cooked for me. I love the people of Gulf States Conference, and I know they love me.

Though many questions related to my call remain, there is one thing that I have not questioned since. God has convinced me that he loves me. It is the most amazing thing. There is no good reason for God to love me—he just does.

The God of the universe reached down to a little Mennonite farm girl in rural Mississippi and said, "I want you." Twenty-five years later, she answered "yes."

Elaine Maust, Meridian, Miss., and her husband Duane own a strawberry farm and a wood-working business. They and their two children, Christine and Nathan, attend the Jubilee Mennonite Church.

"But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant."—Psalm 86:15-16a

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Reading the letter from the 75 pastors ("Readers Say," April 9), calling the denomination to repent, refreshed memories of when I first began pastoring in the mid-1970s. Back then, the charismatic movement was sweeping through the church. I remember the insecure feelings I had for not speaking in tongues or having "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." I felt less than saved around charismatics.

Today the Promise Keepers movement seems to have become a new test of faith. "Have you attended?" is the standard question I get asked. In my weaker moments, insecurity once again peeks out, and I feel a need to confess, "I have not made a PK meeting." But, I hasten to add, "I have listened to hours of Promise Keepers speakers on the radio." My confession doesn't often impress, however.

I am happy for the pastors who have attended and who have been blessed. But please refrain from asking our church to confess. Rather, use the new insights to stand with men and women struggling in difficult marriages.

Incidentally, I agree with Promise Keepers in the emphasis of men being accountable in their marriages. This has touched an important topic in society. But I disagree with the undergirding Promise Keepers theology supporting male hierarchy in the Christian home and church.

Larry Hauder
Boise, Idaho

I'm writing, not about the Canadian-U.S. issues presented in your two editorials, ***What's in a Border?*** (June 25 and July 2) but rather about the terminology used to describe the integrated MC-GC denomination. I am troubled by the phrases "North American-wide Mennonite church" and "a continent-wide denomination" (July 2).

Am I missing something? The map of North America in my atlas shows a continent that embraces more countries than just the United States and Canada. It has more borders than just the 49th parallel. It seems presumptuous, even arrogant, to suggest that a denominational organization that excludes the Anabaptists of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean (who are included instead with South America in the *Mennonite Yearbook*) should keep referring to itself as "North American."

This description has been suggested as part of the new denominational name. I pray that sensitivity to our Anabaptist brothers and sisters in the countries below the 30th parallel will be one of the criteria used in selecting the name of the new denomination. We are all North Americans.

Virginia Glass Schlabach
Perkasie, Pa.

Thank you for your recent editorials on the question of the U.S.-Canadian border for our future integrated denomination (***What's in a Border?*** June 25 and July 2). I guess I'm in the minority among U.S. Mennonites—I favor two denominations along national lines.

That idea is simple, and it takes seriously the fact that the mission of the church is substantially based on the nation in which it functions and to which it witnesses. Except for naturally occurring cooperative efforts, I do not favor an additional layer of organization to keep U.S. and Canadian Mennonites together. That, it seems to me, is the job of Mennonite World Conference.

Is separating U.S. and Canadian Mennonites into two denominations a failure at reconciliation or a caving into nationalism? Not at all. Again, that's why we have Mennonite World Conference—to bring together all Mennonites regardless of national boundaries. Thus I fail to see the need or purpose for a North American Mennonite Church.

I believe our mission will be clearer and stronger—and the status and purpose of Mennonite World Conference will be enhanced—by having a U.S. denomination and a Canadian one.

Ryan Ahlgrim
Indianapolis, Ind.

Scott Holland's letter (June 11), in which he calls Anabaptist theology cultural—and advocates cultural disarmament in our discipleship and peace witness—raises a couple of questions.

How does one disarm? Deny roots? Is it even possible? Or is culture so embedded in the human condition that we deceive ourselves into thinking we can neutralize it? Perhaps other cultural sensitivity efforts are more realistic.

Also, why are beliefs jelled and claimed in the 14th century (even by a

"sectarian, perfectionistic, peasant culture"—Holland's phrase) so difficult for modern Mennonites to affirm?

Holland's last sentence begins, "Since our peace has destroyed many. . . ."

Let me affirm Holland's parting thought: "That we too are part of the great church of saints and sinners—but mostly sinners desperately needing God's grace."

John A. Hertzler
Mathews, Va.

I was born in Russia into an Orthodox home. I came to America in 1952 through the efforts of Mennonite Central Committee. I am not a Mennonite but I do attend a Mennonite church.

But when I read ***Exploring Syria*** (June 4), I had to ask: what does the Syrian Orthodox Church have that Mennonites can learn from them? Did they ask the Mennonites to close the service with prayer?

Why do we work hard selling used clothing and other things through MCC in order to send Mennonite leaders around the world to learn from the Orthodox? Why not teach them Mennonite faith and traditions?

I have also been halfway around the world, and the Mennonite church is the best one.

Katharyn Iwanowksi
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

Today we are searching for a name for a new integrated denomination. Just as with local congregations, some want to use the word "Mennonite," and others think that this interferes with our witness.

If a congregation chooses to use a name without Mennonite in it, they could at least put (MC) behind that name. This helps to identify them with the denomination.

I would also like to see the new name for the integrated denomination to be The Mennonite Church. To me it would be wise to continue using our present name.

E. J. Leinbach
Goshen, Ind.

Letters are welcome. Please keep them short—100 to 150 words— and to one point. Address: "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com

THE TOP 10 MENNONITE BUMPER STICKERS

10 HONK IF YOU ♥ MENNO

9 I'D RATHER BE QUILTING

8 THEY'LL TAKE AWAY MY BIBLE WHEN THEY PRY IT OUT OF MY COLD, DEAD HAND

7 MY OTHER CAR IS NOT A BUGGY

6 HAVE A NON-VIOLENT DAY

5 I'M TOO HUMBLE TO ADMIT MY CHILD IS A NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLAR

4 ASK ME ABOUT 'DIE STILLEN IM LANDE'

3 HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR ENEMY TODAY?

2 SHUNNING ISN'T EVERYTHING; IT'S THE ONLY THING

1 SHOOFLY HAPPENS

— *Randall J. Roth and Ryan Ahlgrim*

Randall J. Roth is pastor of the Des Moines (Iowa) Mennonite Church and Ryan Ahlgrim of the First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, Ind.

What we can learn about victory

Spiritual powers and beings are at work in our world. But we have largely reinterpreted that to take the content out of confrontation with these spiritual beings.

by Phil Lindell Detweiler

Recently I visited the pastor of a small evangelical church in a remote village in central Benin. We worshiped together as the choir from the church sang and drummed their affirmation of faith. It went something like this: "Dear God, we used to serve Satan. But now we have turned from Satan to serve you, the one true, eternal God."

This alone was a moving experience. But when the pastor went on to explain the trials that the church has encountered during the last years, the words took on new meaning for me.

The church plant in this village had started about five years earlier. For the first year or so, things went quite well; the church didn't grow rapidly, but it grew. Then the church, which had faced no opposition from the community, suddenly found that the Oro society priests stirred up the villagers to declare to the church that they didn't want to hear anything more about this Jesus. Preaching in the name of Jesus would no longer be allowed in this village, they said.

Oro is one of the very powerful social institutions (sometimes called "bush societies") that guide the life of the community in rural, animistic settings in Benin. The Oro priests are the interpreters of the spirit world for the villagers. They carry out the rites of passage into adulthood. They offer sacrifices to the fetishes that guard their community in order to overcome social disorder and any other misfortune besetting community members. In short, Oro is one of the foundational pillars on which rural life is built.

The Oro priests apparently saw Jesus as a threat to their power and prestige. As a result, for more than two years this pastor and his parishioners fought a fight against (in his words) "the powers of darkness" that had come against the kingdom of light. The church was forced to go underground. Church members weren't allowed to worship publicly. They were beaten for confession of Jesus as Lord. The pastor was threatened with death. And an Oro priest defied even the civil authorities on several occasions, swearing that "the name Jesus will not be heard in our village!"

This confrontation between the church and the Oro priests was one of power. Two different worldviews were in total opposition to each other. Two religious institutions were vying for the hearts and minds of the people of these villages. Neither had room for the other in its worldview. As the pastor put it, it was a battle between darkness and light, good and evil. And the church responded to this challenge by praying for deliverance and victory in this battle.

The end of the story of that church planting is that the Lord worked mightily to give victory to the Christians who remained faithful to him during the time of trial. The church has grown by leaps and bounds and has seen the power of the Oro society diminish as adherents of Oro turn to Christ.

For African Christians, the theological theme of victory in Christ is central to their Christian understanding. The story of my pastor friend describes one situation in which Africans face this need for victory. Africans do not hold a secular worldview which attempts to rationalize all reality—as most Westerners do, even most Christians. Everything that they encounter in life is seen through a spiritual lens. When someone falls ill, people ask what sin that person has committed that has caused her or him to fall ill. When a business enterprise goes bankrupt, the owner wonders who cursed him so that he would fail. When a woman has a miscarriage, everyone in the family wonders what family member ate the soul of the baby. They look for an evil power to suppress or appease. In contrast, Westerners would look for some "logical," material cause for each of these occurrences.

Africans seek practical and workable solutions to their everyday problems in a pragmatic fashion similar to our own. But instead of going to different doctors and trying different medicines to cure an illness, the villagers would be more apt to work at this issue spiritually by going from one practitioner to the next until they find one powerful enough to overcome the problem. They may start by going to an herbalist who will give them an herbal tea to drink. If that doesn't cure the illness, they may decide to approach the sand cutter—a diviner who

from a Beninese village

practices his art using sand. And if he can't discern the answer to the problem, they may go to the fetishist who will sacrifice an animal and may look at the intestines to find out what has provoked the illness. In short, they look for someone powerful enough to solve their problem and overcome the evil.

The theme of victory in Christ is terribly important in this context. I have lately been struck by the contrast of that motif with the prevailing theological themes in Mennonite settings in North America. How often do we talk about the victory that we have in Christ? Is that victory solely applicable to the victory that Christ had in overcoming the grave and thus ensuring our salvation and eternal life? Or are there daily situations in which we should look for victory in Christ rather than the other things that we put our trust in? If we put our trust in other things, are we basically expressing lack of faith in the one who says that he can meet *all of our needs* (Phil. 4:19)? Have we emphasized suffering and servanthood to the point that those themes have entirely supplanted victory? Should we look more actively for the powers and principalities of evil that could be causing the problems that we face?

There are no easy answers to these questions. But I am learning from my African brothers and sisters to look for victory over situations that before I had previously left God out of. And I am growing more aware of the power of evil in our world, even in North America. We as Westerners can learn a number of things from our African brothers and sisters about power, victory, and the sovereignty of God.

Beninese pastors gather for a weeklong Bible seminar sponsored by Mennonite Board of Missions. In the center is Celestine Jako, who teaches each course he takes to 30 other pastors in central Benin. These Bible seminars fulfill a request to MBM from African Independent Churches for additional leadership training.

First, we need to realize that our world is not as different from an African's as we might think. At one level, Africans see life as a succession of encounters to be overcome. They search for spiritual answers to these often very worldly problems. Yet there are indications that we do some of the same thing. For instance, Ronald Reagan apparently planned some of his presidential decision-making around the prognostications of an astrologer. And I recently learned that many executives of large corporations in France consult spiritists or astrologers to help them make business decisions. And in the United States, how many newspapers don't have horoscopes included in their pages? These things are not so far removed from what an African does when he goes to a diviner to find out the source of his business' failure or when he pays for an elaborate sacrifice so that the fetishist can read the entrails to explain what is happening in his life.

In both settings, one is seeking a spiritual answer to a problem. At least some sectors of Western society are looking for spiritual answers to day-to-day problems. All of these attempts to find spiritual answers to Western problems are an indication of the inadequacy of our secular worldview. Many people face this inadequacy by taking recourse in astrologers, mediums, or spiritists.

We need to integrate spiritual beings and forces into our worldview. We need to see the struggle between good and evil that is at work, even in the West. The language of spiritual warfare is not the language of *Gospel Herald*, nor of the Mennonite church as a whole. This theme of encounter between good and evil, however, is a predominant biblical theme that we have largely ignored by buying into a secular worldview. This worldview is biblically inadequate as well as inadequate for helping us to face life's challenges.

Our secular worldview does not adequately take into account the biblical narrative. The Old Testament tells of numerous power en-

What is victory in Christ for Westerners? Is it solely applicable to salvation and eternal life? Or are there daily situations in which we experience this victory?

counters. In the story of the confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18), the lines are drawn: God is the true God, Baal is a false god. The test is to see which has more power. The entire book of Job is a story of the confrontation between good and evil. God allows the devil to take his best shot at Job in the devil's quest to show that Job isn't really all that faithful to God when the chips are down. It is a classic encounter between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

This theme is developed in a number of ways and places in the New Testament. Jesus often cast demons out of people. In fact, in Luke 4:39, Jesus rebukes the fever of Simon Peter's mother. This is reminiscent of Africans' rebuking, in the name of Jesus, the spirits that are causing illness.

Colossians develops perhaps most fully the theme of Christ confronting the powers. Jesus "rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son. . . ." (Col 1:13). In fact, all of these "dominions, principalities, and authorities" were created through and for Jesus (Col. 1:16). But apparently some of these principalities and powers rebelled against the authority of Jesus. Colossians deals with this rebellion by saying that in his work on the cross, Jesus "disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them . . ." (Col. 2:15). This victory is based on the fact that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1:15), and in him "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily," giving us fullness of life in Jesus, "who is the head of every ruler and authority" (Col. 2:9-10). Therefore, in Jesus we have victory over the powers of evil because he has already disarmed them.

All these passages indicate that spiritual powers and beings are at work in the world. We have largely reinterpreted these verses to take out the content of confrontation between spiritual beings. Because it fits better with our secular worldview, we sometimes equate the principalities and powers with governmental structures, or we simply say that our world is no longer like this. But I contend that we need to take seriously these passages that deal with the confrontation between good and evil or God and the devil.

We need to proclaim God as sovereign and victorious over all aspects of our life. Instead of looking for only material causes and solutions for life's struggles, we should take inspiration from the spiritual worldview of our African brothers and sisters. We should look for God's involvement in even the mundane areas of life. When we are sick, we shouldn't put our faith in medicines but instead realize that medicines and medical science are simply tools that our sovereign God uses to bring healing. All healing ultimately comes from God. We should see that God may even be involved in financial challenges that we face. Could it be that God is present in our financial failures and trying to teach us a spiritual lesson?

God is sovereign over all aspects of our life. Our secular worldview largely denies this and tries to box God into some small corner of our lives that we only rarely activate. But God wants us to acknowledge his lordship over all the diverse aspects of our life.

And God can give us victory as well. We can take inspiration from our Beninese brothers and sisters who find victory over their problems when God intervenes to meet the daily, practical needs of their lives. Traditional Mennonite theological themes like servanthood, discipleship, and suffering are essential themes for a mature disciple of Christ. But we also need to experience joy and victory! Discipleship should never become an excuse for down-in-the-mouth slogging through our Christian journey. God is interested in the minute details of our lives—what cause for rejoicing! The Christian life is not all joy and victory, but it should also not be devoid of those qualities either. If it is, we have probably denied the sovereignty of God over our lives and are trying to run them on our own abilities—or, worse yet, we are putting our faith in something that isn't God.

Power, victory, and confrontation are not the only words that need to shape our spiritual understanding. But according to the New Testament, they are the final words, given that Christ has defeated the powers and principalities! My Beninese pastor friend would say that to work in Benin we must be able to appropriate Christ's power to have victory over the powers of evil. Otherwise one's ministry will be futile.

Phil Lindell Detweiler and his spouse, Christine, are missionaries with Mennonite Board of Missions in rural Benin, West Africa. They work with an association of evangelical churches in developing community health strategies.

AMBS • Window

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Reflections

"A good year—one we will long remember"

Gerald Gerbrandt, interim president

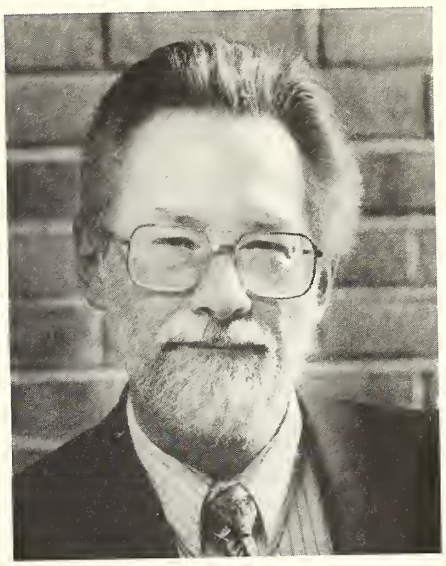
June 20, 1996

I am surrounded by boxes and clutter. Our year at AMBS is over and our family is preparing for the move back to Winnipeg.

My introduction came at the June 1995 board meetings. I watched as the board struggled with financial pressures. The challenge was obvious, but the dedication and wisdom of this group—charged by the church to set direction for the school—was reassuring. I wondered how we would manage, but then was humbled by the willingness of all employees to work at the challenge together.

Summer school 1995 drew people from throughout North America and beyond. The fellowship of these, most also far away from home, provided an immediate community for us. Then came the opening of the fall semester. When registration was complete, student enrollment was up twenty-five percent. The enthusiasm and excitement this created set the tone for the year.

Much of the school year itself is a blur—it passed so quickly. But who can forget Michael Banks, pastor from New York City, inviting us to join the movement of God? Coffee and discussion in the lounge with students and colleagues was an important aspect of daily life. A January conference sponsored with Mennonite Mutual Aid considered how our tradition of mutual aid might remain alive into the future. Countless meetings appeared on my daily schedule. John Collins in the Theological Lectureship introduced us to the Dead Sea Scrolls and reflected with us how the ideas in them may have influenced how Jesus was understood. Visits to churches were an opportunity to share about the seminary and listen to suggestions and concerns. I was impressed by the supportive words I heard and the interest in AMBS. The year ended with Jonathan Larson challenging the graduates and all of us to help transform God's creation, as Christ has transformed us.



J. Tyler Klassen

Truly, we have been enriched by the year. I have come to appreciate our seminary in a new way. Here is a place where enthusiastic students gather to examine where God is calling them and prepare for service in the church. Here is a place where faculty members relate to students, teach, and do research on questions facing the church,while actively involved in their own congregations. Here is a place where students, staff and faculty worship and pray together.

The theme for the fiftieth anniversary celebration was "Foundations for the Future." We, in the Anabaptist tradition, treasure our past and the faithfulness of our ancestors. This is good, and we have much to learn from them. But this is not where our primary focus can be. God is alive and at work in our world, and God is calling the body of Christ to be agents of reconciliation. Our separatist tradition has sometimes prevented us from giving this mission the priority it deserves. As the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church merge, looking outwards must receive higher priority. AMBS has a critical role to play in preparing leaders for such a church. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this community and task for one year!

Gerald Gerbrandt served as interim president of AMBS for one year. This summer he returns to his position as academic dean of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man.

Inside

Graduates prepared for serving the church

Commencement

AMBS Panorama

Highlights of the year in photos

Graduates prepared for serving the church

Forty-five students graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on May 24. Twenty-three received the Master of Divinity; 16 the Master of Arts in Theological Studies; five the Master of Arts in Peace Studies and one the Certificate in Theological Studies.

Douglas Amstutz MDiv. Will complete a summer internship in Moundridge, Kan.; fall plans in process. "A delightful mixture of main course learning with extra-seminary speakers and experiences has been invigorating and challenging for me. Such learnings have fed upon each other." He is married to Wanda Roth Amstutz and is a member of Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., and Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church. His parents are Ken and Vonnie Amstutz, Kidron.

Terry Berg MDiv. Will complete a term of Clinical Pastoral Education at Bronson Hospital in Kalamazoo, Mich., this summer. "AMBS has been a place to process previous ministry experiences and to reflect and grow in my understanding of what it means to be a ministering person." Terry is married to Cathy Beery Berg and he is a member of Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Paul Bergen MDiv. Will return to pastoral ministry with First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alb. "I valued the opportunity to reflect on my pastoral vocation in a context where support and encouragement accompanied the challenge to grow in faith." Paul is married to Heather Bergen and they have two children. His parents are Frank and Ella Bergen, Winnipeg, Man.

Marion Bontrager MDiv. *Not pictured* Will continue as teacher of Bible, Hesston (Kan.) College. Marion is married to Buetta Bontrager and is a member of Hesston Mennonite Church. He previously earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree from GBS and by additional study qualified for the Master of Divinity degree.

Rhett L. Butler MDiv. Pastor of two United Methodist churches near Warsaw, Ind.: Atwood Aldersgate and Clunette. "I have especially appreciated the opportunity to engage the Bible from the perspective of the original language. This has added depth to my biblical understanding." Rhett and Suzanne Butler have three children; he is the son of Keith and Anita Butler of Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Steve Echols

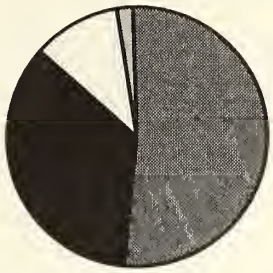
Left to right: Douglas Amstutz, Wanda Roth Amstutz, Premanand Bagh, Terry Berg, Paul Bergen

Wanda Roth Amstutz MDiv. Will complete a summer internship in Moundridge, Kan.; fall plans in process. "My whole experience at AMBS has been meaningful—relationships with peers and professors, growth in Bible and theology as well as deepened spirituality." Wanda is married to Doug Amstutz and her parents are Howard and Shirley Roth of Tavistock, Ont. She is a member of East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock.

Premanand Bagh Certificate in Theological Studies. Will pursue doctoral study in Oxford, England, and will teach at Allahabad Bible Seminary in India. "I was blessed and enriched by the Mennonite heritage and its tradition. I especially enjoyed the worship, preaching, and Sunday School lessons in the Mennonite churches. The theology and peace studies curriculum at AMBS is excellent." He and Rachel, his wife, have two children. He is a member of the Salem congregation of the General Conference Mennonite Church in India. He is the son of the Rev. Jaisingh and Mrs. Kamla Bagh of Saraipali, Madhya Pradish, India.

Sang Jin Choi MAPS. Will pursue doctoral studies in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. "I am sure that AMBS is a light of Peace Studies and that Mennonites will provide hope for the Christian peace movement toward the 21st century world peace." He is married to Eun-Young Lee and they have one child. His mother is Mrs. Young Choon Kim of Seoul, Korea. He currently serves as youth minister of the Washington Chodae Church.

June Mears Driedger MATS in Christian Spirituality. Plans in process. "Seminary helped me find my voice—to



Programs completed by 1996 graduates

- Master of Divinity - 23
- Master of Arts in Theological Studies - 16
- Master of Arts in Peace Studies - 5
- Certificate in Theological Studies - 1

articulate what I was soulfully experiencing and integrate that with theological language." June is married to Kevin Driedger and she is a member of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church. Her parents are Ivan and Iris Mears of Los Angeles.

Kevin Driedger MATS in Biblical Studies. Plans in process. "AMBS provided me the opportunity to delve deep into the Bible and emerge with a greater awareness of who I am." Kevin is married to June Mears Driedger and is the son of Dennis and Sue Driedger, Winkler, Man. He is a member of Grace Mennonite Church, Winkler.

Henry Dyck III MAPS. *Not pictured* Will pursue graduate study at Queen's University, Kingston, Ont. Dyck has found meaningful the "faculty commitment to ethics, Anabaptist tradition and academic excellence and the diversity of the student body at AMBS." He also appreciated teaching and mentoring at a youth drop-in center; "Great experience!" Henry is the son of Henry and Caroline Dyck of Harriston, Ont.

Leo J. Filon III MAPS. *Not pictured* Will pursue a degree in Quaker Studies at Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, Ind. Leo appreciated the opportunity to "grapple with Mennonite issues of theology, peace and justice at a time of personal, societal and religious challenge with the help of friends and faculty." Leo is a member of South Bend (Ind.) Friends Meeting, and attended Seattle Mennonite Church, Seattle, Wash. His parents are Leo J. Filon Jr. and Claire A. McCoog Filon of Philadelphia, Pa.

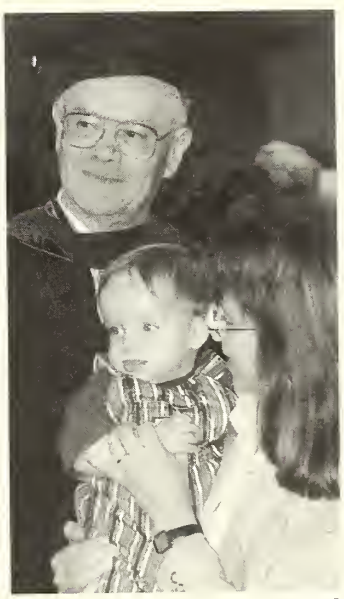
Brent E. Foster MDiv. *Not pictured* Continue as pastor of Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill. "I have experienced support and encouragement while exploring in new areas of learning and personal development. The staff and faculty of AMBS have been great." Brent and Sandra, his wife, have three children. His parents are Cecile Amerson and John Foster of Peoria, Ill.

Patty Friesen MDiv. Plans in process. Patty found most helpful at AMBS the opportunity of "connecting with other women students as we test our call and find our place in the church." Patty is a member of Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church. Her parents are Ed and Faye Friesen of Edmonton, Alb.

Raúl O. García MATS in Christian Education. Continue as co-pastor of his congregation in Buenos Aires, and as coordinator of the leadership training program of the Argentine Mennonite Church. What he found meaningful was "to deepen my fellowship with God through the Scripture and the influence of consecrated teachers; also to share experiences with people with the same goals in life." Raúl is married to Anita Edna Swartzentruber and they have three children.

Steve Echols

Left to right: Rhett Butler, Sang Jim Choi, June Mears Driedger, Kevin Driedger, Patty Friesen, Raúl García



Raúl García, Pehuajo, Argentina, celebrates his graduation with his daughter-in-law Silvia Vicente García and youngest grandchild, Nicolás, of Chicago. Raúl, who is president of Mennonite World Conference, coordinates the Leadership Training Program of the Argentine Mennonite Church and serves as co-pastor of his congregation. He received a Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree in Christian Education.
Photo by Mary E. Klassen.

Roger Golden MATS in Christian Spirituality. Pursuing geriatric pastoral care and pastoral ministry. "AMBS has given time for mid-life reflection, renewal and retooling. The enthusiasm and affirmation of faculty, staff and other students has been very meaningful." Roger is married to Alice Golden and they have three children. He is a member of Wawaka Church of the Brethren, Wawaka, Ind. His mother is Martha Golden of Kimmell.

Noé Gonzalía MDiv. Will return to ministry in Colombia. Most meaningful has been "to find a group of persons (professors, staff and students) committed to the Christian values. Our whole family has been surrounded by a positive fraternal environment." Noé is married to Araminta Gonzalía and they have three children. He is the son of Jorge Gonzalía and Rebeca Polanco of Guacari, Colombia.

Susan Gotwals MDiv. Plans in process. "The spiritual depth and commitment to Jesus Christ which faculty members shared in the classroom and in chapels greatly nurtured my own spiritual formation." Susan is a member of Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, and is the mother of two children. Her parents are Robert and Lucille Gotwals, Souderton, Pa.

Ruth Johnston MATS in theology and ethics. Plans in process. "I have found meaningful the close community of students and the academic excellence of the faculty." Ruth is the daughter of Don and Betsy Johnston, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, and is a member of First Mennonite Church in Iowa City. She and fellow AMBS graduate Shuji Moriichi were married June 1.

Cameron Kaufman-Frey MDiv. Plans in process. "Seminary has helped me to discern two things: who I am as a minister and where I hear God calling me to minister." Cameron is married to Dawn Kaufman-Frey and is the son of Amsey and Ina Frey, St. Clements, Ont. He is a member of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Helen Kruger MDiv. Supervisor of a Clinical Pastoral Education program. "To be a church leader means thorough study of one's self through close interaction with peers and teachers in a community setting. Christianity affects all areas of one's life." Helen is married to William Kruger and they have three children. She is a member of Osler (Sask.) Mennonite Church.

Ella Mae Lehman MATS in Christian Spirituality. "AMBS has been a place of nurture and challenge. My 'mini-sabbaticals' in this faith community have brought together the head and the heart." Ella Mae and Jay E., her husband, have four children. She is a member of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Tim Lichti MDiv. Continue as director of MennoHof, a Mennonite and Amish visitors' center in Shipshewana. Lichti says he found most meaningful the "nurturing atmosphere, the sense of partnership in learning and growing, and a solid commitment to quality and the church." Tim is married to Carolyn and they have two children. He is a member of Shore Mennonite Church.

Douglas R. Luginbill MDiv. *Not pictured* Associate pastor of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio. "Gaining a deep love for Scripture, experiencing diversity and creativity in worship and interacting with a caring community have prepared me to serve the church." Doug is married to Paula Luginbill and they have two children. He is the son of Kathryn Luginbill, Pandora, Ohio. He is a member of Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Chris Marshall MAPS. *Not pictured* Will continue as lecturer in New Testament Studies, Bible College of New Zealand. "I greatly valued the chance to interact with and learn from Mennonite scholars. I feel better equipped to bring some of the richness of the Anabaptist tradition into my own situation in New Zealand." Chris is married to Margaret Marshall and they have two children.

Steve Echols

Left to right: Roger Golden, Noé Gonzalía, Susan Gotwals, Ruth Johnson, Cameron Kaufman-Frey, Helen Kruger

Missionary/storyteller addresses graduates

"Unless a grain of wheat falls in the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." With this text from John 12, Jonathan Larson addressed the AMBS graduates in the May 24 commencement service. The former missionary told stories from the Bible and from his mission experiences of "descent into darkness," and "rising to fruitfulness."

One story related his experience of leading Bible studies with two small congregations on the edge of the Kalahari desert. Because many of the people were illiterate, he abandoned his written lesson materials, and found that in studying Job, the congregation members knew far more than he did. Then he added, "It begins with a falling... giving up what we think we have so that we may be entrusted with that fruitful rising that exceeds our imaginings."

He concluded his address, saying "There is no greater gift than that somewhere in some mystery, there is a falling and rising which awaits us all, and from which creation itself will be transformed."

Jonathan, who currently is interim pastor of Berea Mennonite Church, Atlanta, Ga., was a Mennonite missionary in Botswana from 1981-1994.

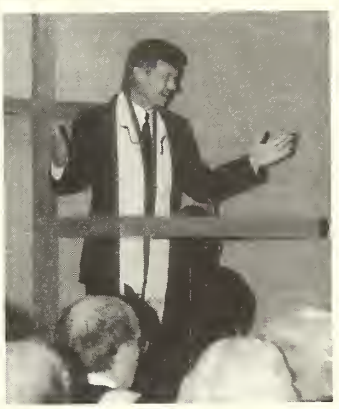
Steve Echols

Left to right: Ella Mae Lehman, Tim Lichti, Keith Meyers, Shuji Moriichi, David Moser

Andreas Martin MATS in Biblical Studies. *Not pictured* Will continue studies, pursuing a doctoral degree in chemistry. At AMBS, Andy found most meaningful the study of the Bible in its original languages. He is a member of the Schänzli congregation in Muttenz, Switzerland. His parents are Bruno and Lotti Martin-Lehmann, Basel, Switzerland.

Alan L. McLearn-Montz MATS in Christian Education. *Not pictured* Plans in process. "The knowledge I have gained about the Believers Church, especially as affirmed by the Anabaptist tradition, has convinced me I too want to claim Anabaptism." Alan is married to Brenda McLearn-Montz, and they have one child. He is a member of the Church of the Brethren in Columbia City, Ind. His parents are Vern and Phyllis Montz of Columbia City.

Keith Meyers MDiv. Will complete a term of Clinical Pastoral Education at Ontario Correctional Institute in Brampton. "I will take the warmth of the community at AMBS with me for the rest of my life." Keith is the son of Earl and Clara Meyers, Kitchener, Ont.



Jonathan Larson, commencement speaker, challenged graduates to be willing to give up what is comfortable in order to experience fruitfulness "which exceeds our imaginings."

Photo by Mary E. Klassen

Shuji Moriichi MATS in church history. Plans in process. "I was fortunate enough to learn what studying church history was—for my vocational goal, the Anabaptist churches and their missions." He is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Sapporo, Japan, and is the son of Ryoko Moriichi, Sapporo. He and Ruth Johnston were married on June 1.

David Moser MDiv. Will return to Northern Ireland to do inner city ministry in Belfast. "I have really valued the opportunity to grow in my biblical knowledge and spirituality at AMBS." He is married to Deborah Watters and is the son of Millard and Janean Moser of Berne, Ind. He is a member of First Mennonite Church, Berne.

Goshen, Ind. "Through course work and community I have grown in pastoral identity, spiritual disciplines and understanding worship. I am grateful for these gifts." Brenda is married to Don Paetkau and they have one child. Her parents are Henry and Mary Sawatzky, Winnipeg, Man.

David Ruby MDiv. *Not pictured* Will complete Clinical Pastoral Education during the summer, then begin as pastor of MacGregor (Man.) Bergthaler Mennonite Church. "This time has been a gift of renewal from God in both personal faith and vision of God's call to the church." David is married to Diane Ruby and they have two children. He is the son of Orlando and Violet Ruby, New Hamburg, Ont.

setting, as well as worshipping and fellowshipping with Christians from across the world." Margaret is married to Walter Sawatsky and they have two adult children. She is a member of Hively Avenue Mennonite Church in Elkhart. Her mother is Aganetha (Mrs. John F.) Warkentin of Rosenort, Man.

George Schmidt MDiv. *Not pictured* Will continue as acting academic dean of Columbia Bible College, Clearbrook, B.C. George and Karen, his wife, have three adult children. He is a member of West Abbotsford (B.C.) Mennonite Church. He previously earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree from AMBS and by additional study qualified for the Master of Divinity degree.

Steve Echols

Left to right: Lois Nickel, Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau, Anita Sauder, Margaret Sawatsky, Carmen Schrock-Hurst, Gordon Scoville

Lois Nickel MATS in Biblical Studies. Plans in process. "These past three years at AMBS have provided space for spiritual growth, pushed me to explore new ways of thinking and given me tools with which to keep on growing in my faith after I leave." She is married to James Nickel and they have three children. Lois is a member of North Leamington Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont., and is the daughter of Peter and Sadie Klassen, Port Rowan, Ont.

Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau MDiv. Continue half-time as associate pastor of Eighth Street Mennonite Church,

Anita Sauder MDiv. Plans in process. "I found living in community and getting to know a variety of people from a variety of places, backgrounds and religions most informative and enlightening. " Anita is a member of West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio, and is the daughter of Dave and Sharon Sauder of Wauseon.

Margaret Warketin Sawatsky MATS in Christian Spirituality. Will continue as activities therapist at Oaklawn Psychiatric Hospital, Goshen, Ind. "I have appreciated studying Christian spirituality in a small Mennonite academic

Carmen Schrock-Hurst MATS in Christian Spirituality. Plans in process. "I have been especially grateful for the friendships of students, faculty and staff who have affirmed, nurtured and challenged my gifts, call and growing faith." Carmen is married to Luke Schrock-Hurst and they have three children. She is a member of Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind. Her parents are Paul and June Schrock, Scottdale, Pa.

Gordon Scoville MDiv. Plans in process. "Being from non-Mennonite background, I have learned much from entering into conversation with Mennonite heritage."

Ten countries represented

Canada	14
United States	23
Argentina	1
Colombia	1
India	1
Japan	1
Korea	1
New Zealand	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	1

Gordon is married to Marie Scoville and is the son of Russell and Berniece Scoville, Wolf Point, Mont. He attends Bonneyville Mennonite Church, Bristol, Ind.

D. Scott Smith MAPS. *Not pictured* Therapist at Buckhorn (Ky.) Children's Center. Scott is married to Jennifer Smith and they have two children. His parents are Donald and Betty Joe Smith of New Carlisle, Ohio.

George Stoltzfus MATS in Christian Spirituality; theology and ethics. General secretary for the Mennonite Church. George, as a former medical doctor, found most meaningful "time for reflection, engagement with issues, spiritual insight, dedicated professors, student friends, and more." He is married to Mae Stoltzfus and they have two children. He is a member of Pinto Mennonite Church, Cumberland, Md.

Lynette Sumpter MDiv. Plans in process. "AMBS has been for me a community in which I have experienced healing, affirmation, challenge and growth." Lynette is a member of Pine Creek Church of the Brethren, North Liberty, Ind. Her parents are Richard and Helen Sumpter of North Liberty.

John M. Troyer MATS in theology and ethics. Will continue as a pastor at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, rural Goshen , Ind. "Two areas stand out from my time at AMBS: my summer as a student intern and my introduction to the thought of René Girard. I value the preparation I received here." John is married to Sheila Troyer and is the son of David and Mary Troyer, Middlebury, Ind.

Jonathan Wenger MATS in church history. Service Adventure Leader in Champaign, Ill. Jonathan is a member of Mennonite Community Church, Fresno, Calif., and is the son of Faith and James Wenger, Fresno.

Grace (An-Huei) Yang MATS in Biblical Studies. Plans in process. "The discussions in and out of the classrooms with faculty and students have enhanced my learning and challenged my thinking in the field of theology and Christian faith." Grace is the daughter of Ming-Chou (Joseph) Yang and Tze Wang (Judith) Yang of Taichung, Taiwan.

Earl Zimmerman MDiv. Pastor at Shalom Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., and pursue Ph.D. studies in theology at Catholic University, Washington, D.C. Earl found most meaningful "the opportunity to study with teachers who were significant mentors to me as well as the experience of Christian community at AMBS." He is married to Ruth Hoover Zimmerman and they have three children. His parents are Amos and the late Ada Barbara Zimmerman.

Steve Echols

Left to right: George Stoltzfus, Lynette Sumpter, John Troyer, Jonathan Wenger, Grace Yang, Earl Zimmerman

Following the commencement service, Araminta Diaz de Gonzalía gets a hug from AMBS student Christine Holsopple Kauffman. Araminta's husband, Noé, graduated with a Master of Divinity degree. They, with their three children, are returning to Colombia this summer. Photo by Mary E. Klassen.

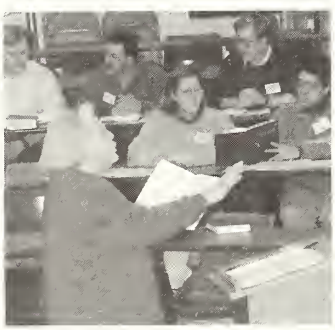
AMBS Panorama

The fiftieth anniversary celebration at AMBS, April 26-28, was undergided by a 50-hour prayer vigil in the Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount. Marked with the lighting of a candle at the beginning of each hour, the vigil involved students, faculty and friends of the seminary in praying for the church and God's kingdom around the world.

The weekend celebrated the beginnings of Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago in 1945, and of Goshen Biblical Seminary in 1946 as part of Goshen College. Other activities included storytelling from different eras of the seminary's history, a reception for former faculty and staff, a choir for all who wanted to sing, and worship in area congregations on Sunday morning.

Photo by Mary E. Klassen

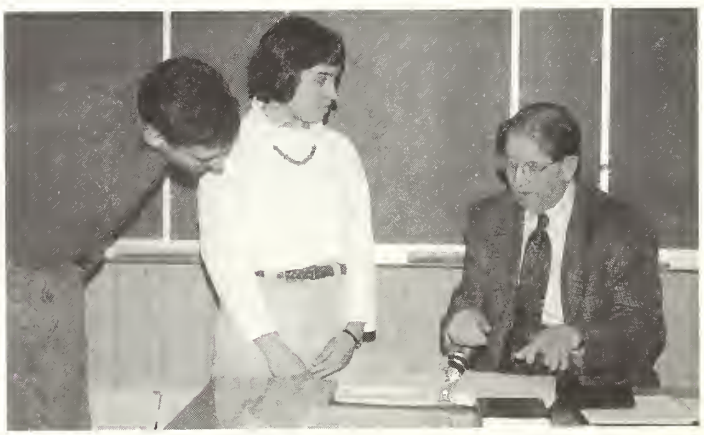
Ross T. Bender shared reminiscences of 26 years at AMBS in the closing forum of the school year. Ross retired at the end of the 1995-96 year, having served as dean from 1964-79, professor of Christian Education and Worship and director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies over a period of 34 years. He also served as president of Mennonite World Conference and pastor of Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo. Photo by Mary E. Klassen



It sounded like a choir the day 50 campus guests participated in a sample class session of "Foundations of Worship and Preaching." The guests came March 3-4 for Seminary Sampler, an open house for people exploring seminary studies. Mary Oyer (shown leading the singing), June Alliman Yoder, and Marlene Kropf led the class session.

Participants included groups from two Mennonite colleges, people exploring career changes, and some already involved in church work.

Photo by Mary E. Klassen



Paul M. Lederach presented a preaching lectureship at AMBS in February, focusing on expository preaching. He exhibited for students his personal study journal of the book of Romans. Through the years, he has kept notebooks of books of the Bible, documenting both his devotional life and his sermon studies. The result is his own personal commentary on each book of the Bible. Examining his Romans notebook are AMBS students Chris Palmer, Kalamazoo, Mich., and Maribeth Longacre, Barto, Pa.

Paul Lederach, an ordained minister in the Franconia Mennonite Conference, served that conference until recently as conference minister. Previously he served with Mennonite Publishing House from 1952-1978.

Paul and Mary, his wife, have created a Fund for Preaching at AMBS to encourage excellence in preaching and to enrich and expand opportunities to teach and develop preaching skills. Previous lecturers include Myron Augsburger, Dennis Hollinger and Eugene Lowry.

Photo by Gordon Janzen.

Preliminary financial report

Preaudited figures indicate that AMBS has balanced its budget for the fiscal year ending June 30. This result was possible through generous gifts from people and congregations throughout the year, especially as the fiscal year came to a close.

Inauguration scheduled

The inauguration of J. Nelson Kraybill as president of AMBS is scheduled for Sunday, March 16, 1997. Nelson will begins his duties at AMBS in January.

Featured presenter

John Shea will be the featured presenter at the 1997 AMBS Pastors' Week, January 27-30, with the theme, "Story shaping faith: The power of story in ministry."

Shea has lectured internationally on theology, ministry and storytelling. He has twenty years of experience as a parish priest and twenty years of experience as a professor of systematic theology at Mundelein Seminary, Mundelein, Ill.

During Pastors' Week, Shea will present three major lectures and he also will be featured in a public storytelling performance on Wednesday, January 29.

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

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South Central Conference, Western District discuss peace and integration

Addison, Tex. (MWR)—South Central Conference congregations are being enlisted in a fight for peace.

"We're in a fight for the souls of our kids," said Marion Bontrager of Hesston, Kan., chair of the South Central Conference peace and service commission. "We live in a violent, post-Christian society."

That's why the commission is urging every congregation to sign a peace and service covenant, making a commitment to active peacemaking. Commission members introduced the covenant at the South Central Conference annual meeting July 5-7 in the Dallas suburb of Addison. The Western District of the General Conference Mennonite Church met at the same time.

The covenant lists 20 suggested peace and service activities, ranging from praying for peace to establishing an ongoing relationship with a congregation of a different ethnic group.

Integration. Regional integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church got a boost when Western District Conference delegates passed a resolution to pursue integration of programs and structures with the South Central and Rocky Mountain conferences.

In the South Central Conference, however, a discussion of merger turned into a debate on homosexuality. The weekend's talk and action on integration showed that while some see a clear path to regional merger, others see obstacles.

Two South Central delegates identified homosexuality as an obstacle. Jerry Wyse of Yoder started the homosexuality discussion by saying, "How do we deal with the conference position when some of the congregations are willing to accept homosexuals as full-fledged members? . . . We have to talk more about specifics in regard to congregational autonomy, or they'll be a lot of us fragmented off."

Autonomy versus authority. Conference minister Richard Headings said South Central's position was the one approved by the MC General Assembly in 1987—that same-gender sex is a sin but that "it is recognized that we must be in conversation with those who are hurting," he said.

Regarding the concern about congregational autonomy in the General Conference Mennonite Church versus conference authority in the Mennonite Church, Headings said: "Over the years we've been moving toward the center on this, . . . but there is still a difference."

Before the discussion turned toward homosexuality, delegates' statements on regional integration ranged from strong support to a bit of concern. Dick Davis of Dallas said: "Let's pick up the speed on this integration thing. Let's go!"

South Central took no action on integration. The Western District called for pursuing with the Rocky Mountain and South Central conferences "all means to further our mutual missions, including integration of conference programs and structures where appropriate."—*Paul Schrag*

Stoltzfus ordained at Allegheny Conference; vows to 'listen to your voice as the very voice of God'

Mt. Pleasant, Pa.—As a symbol of the style of leadership he has chosen, the church's new general secretary, George B. Stoltzfus, included foot washing as part of his ordination service. And because of his long-time association with Allegheny Mennonite Conference, these events took place during that conference's annual sessions July 11-14, held at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center.

The ordination charge was given by Dale Stoltzfus, Allegheny Conference minister, and Owen Burkholder, Mennonite Church moderator. Earl Yoder, a friend of Stoltzfus' and an Allegheny Conference overseer, preached the ordination sermon.

Stoltzfus received a pitcher and basin as a gift from Allegheny Conference by moderator Linford Martin. The pitcher is inscribed: "For surely I know the plans I have for you . . . to give you a future with hope" (Jer. 29:11).

"Those are the very words that helped me decide to accept the role of general secretary," Stoltzfus told the audience following the ordination. George and his wife, Mae, attended Pinto (Md.) Mennonite Church before moving to Indiana in 1992 to attend Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Prior to going to seminary, he had served as a physician and a hospital administrator in Maryland and West Virginia. Stoltzfus was also moderator of Allegheny Conference from 1990-92 and its representative to the General Board for five years.

"I call on you, Allegheny Conference, to keep me accountable, even from a distance, in my new role," Stoltzfus said. "I promise to listen to your voice as the very voice of God."

Stoltzfus began his assignment as the new general secretary on July 1.

Other conference 'business.' Stoltzfus' ordination was held during the first worship service of the four-day conference. The sessions also included reports from the various conference commissions, seminars, and separate activities for children, junior high, and high school youth.

Allegheny also features one church-wide board at each of its annual sessions. This year the staff of the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries led in seminars and worship sessions. Carlos Romero spoke at the Saturday evening youth rally and Anne Stuckey preached Sunday morning.

James M. Lapp was the preacher for the worship service on Friday evening. Lapp preceded Stoltzfus as general secretary of the Mennonite Church.

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Stoltzfus (left) washes feet with his long-time friend, John Spicher, Irwin, Pa.

Indiana-Michigan Conference passes statement on homosexuality and membership; future unclear

Gaylord, Mich.—Ninety-one percent of the delegates to the Indiana-Michigan Conference annual meeting here approved a statement on homosexuality and membership.

What the statement means and the reasons people voted for it aren't quite so clear, some say.

The statement that delegates approved at the July 11-13 meeting reads in part, "We endorse only those sexual unions that are between a man and a woman in a marriage covenant. We expect congregations to extend membership only to those who have opened themselves to Christ's transforming Spirit" *(see statement below).*

At the same time, conference delegates took no action on Southside Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind.—the congregation that has been at the center of conference debate since accepting into membership a man living in a covenanted same-sex relationship.

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"The specifics of how this is to be worked out are still unanswered," says Mary Grove, General Board delegate on the executive committee, about the statement affirmed this weekend. "But a direction is set. . . . In some ways it's a reaffirmation of what we've said before."

The 1995 IM conference delegates passed a statement asking congregations to reaffirm the Purdue 87 statement that says homosexuality is a sin. The statement says that if after a year Southside Fellowship "does not find itself in agreement with the counsel being given . . . the relationship with IM Conference will be further evaluated."

This year's statement essentially places the issue back in the hands of the conference executive committee and church life commission. According to conference minister Charlotte Holsopple Glick, the delegates' decision means "ongoing conversations with Southside, with people who could not affirm these statements, and with those who believe the action taken was not sufficient."

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The executive committee's original recommendation asked all congregations to recovenant with the conference within the next year based on agreement with several statements of faith. Churches that chose not to recovenant would have had the option of becoming associate members of conference.

Hefty critique of the recommendation—expressed from all sides of the debate—prompted the executive committee to present a shortened statement at the Saturday morning session. After two amendments were proposed and defeated, 201 of the 221 delegates present voted yes for the new statement.

Delegates squeezed impassioned speeches into the 1 1/2 minute-long slots given them by moderator Don Delagrange. Concerns ranged from "whether we want to be a conference where anything goes" (Daniel Slabaugh, Marion, Shipshewana) to reminders to "bear with one another in love" (Steve Thomas, Walnut Hill, Goshen).

"We want to remain your brothers and sisters, but we have to go where the Holy Spirit has led us," was the plea from Jeni Hiett Umble, pastor at Southside.

"If we come to the point of accepting sin, are we telling the world that Jesus doesn't have the power to change lives?" asked Drew Bontrager, Coldsprings Mennonite Church, Mancelona, Mich.

Glenn Leinbach of Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, mentioned that Scripture also speaks to greed and dissension. "Do we want to spend time at every conference meeting evaluating congregations and their qualifications?" Leinbach asked.

Others agreed. "If we do, in fact, desire accountability, it must be in all areas of faith and practice," said Rachel Miller Jacobs of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen. "And it must be mutual, rather than selecting one area for scrutiny and only one group to be examined."

Some delegates lamented how much time the issue took at the conference and said that conference leadership rather than the delegate body should make such decisions. "I believe it's time for us to submit and to allow our leaders to lead," said Jim van Dorn of Menominee River Fellowship, Marinette, Wis. "We need to get on with other business. Please."

The issue was discussed in four of the five delegate sessions. The blast of a ram's horn periodically interrupted meetings, followed by "Vision: Healing and Hope Moments." These pauses in business included Scripture readings, reciting of the *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement accompanied by hand motions, and singing of a piece composed by Brenda Isaacs based on the words of the vision statement.

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Worship sessions on the theme of "I have called you by name" featured moderator Don Delagrange and pastor Duane Beck from Belmont Mennonite as speakers. In a sermon on the Beatitudes, Beck highlighted the importance of holding mercy and righteousness together. "They combine the passion of God for righteousness and the compassion of God for people," Beck said.

In other business, IM delegates:

- approved a budget of $695,000.
- reaffirmed three conference ministers—Charlotte Holsopple Glick, Del Glick, Stan Troyer—to second terms;
- affirmed James Waltner as moderator-elect and welcomed Marian Hostetler as moderator;
- applauded two recipients of peace awards from the conference justice, peace, and service commission—Jessie Nance and Homer Nisly, both members of the Kern Road congregation in South Bend.

—*Valerie Weaver*

IM delegates approve three-point statement

Gaylord, Mich.—Indiana-Michigan Conference delegates approved the following statement on membership and homosexuality by a 91 percent vote at their July 11-13 meeting:

"We bring these statements, believing that God's Spirit will give counsel and direction in the midst of our praying, discerning, and working together on the issue of homosexuality and congregational membership of same-sex unions.

A. We affirm the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as the basis for our unity in faith and practice.

B. We affirm the General Assembly statements as our corporate understandings of various aspects of our life together.

C. We affirm the *Purdue 87* statement, the General Board summary statement of 1991, and Article 19 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as our understandings of sexual practice. We endorse only those sexual unions that are between a man and a woman in a marriage covenant. We expect congregations to extend membership only to those who have opened themselves to Christ's transforming Spirit. We further expect congregations to continue guiding and nurturing members in ethical behavior as taught by the Mennonite Church, including understandings of sexual practice."

Church grants available for antiviolence events

Akron, Pa. (MCS)—Several grants are now available for urban congregations that are addressing violence in their communities.

Sums of up to $1,000 will be offered to congregations that plan events that provide a forum to discuss violence in the community and that organize creative responses that can be carried out by those in attendance. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S.'s Office of Crime and Justice and Mennonite Conciliation Service's Urban Peacemaking Desk are issuing the grants.

Congregations should be located in urban areas, and events should be scheduled between September 1996 and June 1997. Events should be local and seek to involve the larger community. They should also include an educational component—such as a community workshop on alternatives to violence—and a forum for discussion. Funded groups must agree to send a representative to a final event in 1997 in which participants would discuss learnings and next steps.

The deadline for proposals is Aug. 31. Proposals (maximum of two pages, including budget) can be sent to: Urban Initiative on Violence, Regina Shands Stoltzfus, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., 1574 South Taylor Road, Cleveland Hts., OH 44118.

Red, brown, yellow, black, and white. *Harrisonburg, Va.*—Edison Castro and Trina Stutzman make prayer chains at an ecumenical and multicultural summer Bible school program involving five congregations in the northeast part of the city. Immanuel Mennonite Church helped to coordinate the June 24-28 program. Attendance during the week averaged about 90 children ranging in age from 4 to 12.

Activities ran simultaneously at John Wesley United Methodist Church and at the nearby Immanuel congregation. Other neighborhood congregations involved in the joint venture were Asuza Christian Center, First Baptist Church, and Bethel A.M.E.

"The striking thing to me is that while the nation is shocked by the rash of arson fires in black churches across the South, here is a shining example of whites, blacks, and Hispanics working together for the common good," says N. Gerald Shenk, a member of Immanuel. Shenk noted that Immanuel was the first Mennonite church in the country to send a contribution to Mennonite Disaster Service earmarked for rebuilding efforts at fire-ravaged church buildings in the South.—*Jim Bishop*

'Hero of the Day'—that's what David Mann of Hesston, Kan., was dubbed on national television in June. CBS gave Mann that title on its morning newscast, and a Wichita television crew followed up on the national announcement by interviewing Mann on its evening news June 24.

Jeanne Mann nominated her father, pastor of Hesston Mennonite Church and former moderator of the Mennonite Church, for the honor last December. "I'm not sure that the title 'Hero of the Day' feels very good for me, but it's okay for me to be my daughter's hero—now that feels alright," says Mann.—*Susan Miller Balzer*

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Thanks in part to Mennonites, the Religious Right movement will not take root in Canada. That's according to Brian Stiller, president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. In a March speech, Stiller noted the "strong influence of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition" as one of the reasons why Canadian evangelicals would not become like their more strident U.S. counterparts. In a later interview, Stiller added, "Your quiet, behind-the-scenes approach has established the way the religious community should relate to government in Canada." He also noted that Mennonites' influence in evangelical educational institutions steers Canadian evangelicals away from right-wing politics.—*John Longhurst, MCC Canada*

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Forty-four years of service were represented at an April reunion of Eastern Mennonite Missions Voluntary Service workers in Immokalee, Fla. About 35 workers met for the weekend to visit the VS house and to recall their days of building houses, teaching school, caring for preschool children, and conducting clubs. They encountered numerous changes—a population growth of 9,000 in 1948 to 30,000 in 1996, and a growth from 13 acres of citrus in Collier County in 1948 to 34,500 acres today.

And they discovered what hasn't changed—the two-story martin birdhouse atop the same pole and the never-changed kitchen counter.—*Thelma Wolgemuth*

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'The Primetimers' don't just sit around watching primetime TV. This group of people age 60 and older at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa, does anything but sit around. They meet for lunch once a month, go on bus tours, play table games, have organized their own choir, and are working on their second musical called "Sugar Sticks for Senior Saints." They performed their first musical, "Sweeter Everyday," eight times. The day they meet for lunch is the same every month "so you can plan your doctors' appointments around it," says one member.—*Pauline Wyse*

Colony Mennonites help build 'New Hope' in jungle of Guatemala

Nueva Esperanza, Guatemala (MCC)—Colony Mennonites from Belize are helping former Guatemalan refugees build a new life here in the tropical jungle, in a unique partnership nurtured by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Four members of the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonite settlement at Spanish Lookout, Belize, came to the jungles of northern Guatemala in April to help rebuild a bridge into Nueva Esperanza (New Hope). Nueva Esperanza is a settlement of 800 former refugees who returned to their homeland in 1995 after years of exile in Mexico, where they had fled in the 1980s to escape government-sponsored repression.

The German-speaking Mennonites know what the Guatemalan "exiles" are up against. They arrived in Belize in 1958 after a long journey in search of religious freedom and good farmland that began in southern Russia in the early 1800s. In Belize, the Mennonite colonists cut down large sections of tropical forest to construct a thriving community. Today, they export agricultural produce throughout the Caribbean.

"God has helped us with our crops over the years," says Peter Friesen, a 24-year-old Mennonite from Belize who traveled to New Hope to work on the bridge. "And today we're well off. It's now our turn to go and help poor people somewhere else. It's God's plan that we do this kind of mission work."

While her husband mixed cement and cut lumber for the bridge which will allow the community to haul out produce to sell in nearby towns, Tina Friesen visited with Guatemalan women and played with the children. Tina Friesen learned Spanish while working in a mission school in Spanish Lookout, where the some 1,400 colony Mennonites have become surrounded by a steadily increasing Spanish-speaking population as Central American immigrants have poured into Belize.

Bernie and Rosela Thiessen drove overland from Spanish Lookout to Nueva Esperanza. Bernie, 43, had earlier participated in his colony's outreach to Salvadoran refugees in Belize. "Jesus helped others. If we want to follow his example, we've got to do that as well," he says.

New Hope's president, Fabian Gaspar, says the Belizians have provided "invaluable assistance" to the former refugees. "We've been struggling, with little money, and they and other international friends have helped us keep our heads above water," Gaspar relates. In addition to the Belizian Mennonites, Canadian and European citizens are maintaining a constant presence in the settlement, nestled in the Esmeralda Valley at the edge of a huge natural reserve. Gaspar said the foreigners' presence is a deterrent to further violence from the Guatemalan military.

Belizian Mennonites began their work in Nueva Esperanza by supervising the laying out of 250 lots for the settlers. MCC hired a Guatemalan surveyor who worked under the Belizians' direction. On June 3, the bridge into Nueva Esperanza was finished. Now the Belizian Mennonites hope to send volunteers to help in road construction within the sprawling community. They would also like to invite Nueva Esperanza leaders to visit them in Belize, to learn of their experiences in community building and agriculture.

—Paul Jeffrey

Peter Friesen (left), a colony Mennonite from Belize, helps two men cut and measure lumber for a bridge into the New Hope settlement in the jungle of Guatemala.

Mennonite lawyers plan link with MEDA

Winnipeg, Man. (MEDA)—Mennonite lawyers plan to bring their association under the umbrella of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

The Mennonite Lawyers Association will operate as a member segment of MEDA and will hold its gatherings prior to or at the same time as MEDA's annual convention.

The lawyers organized in the early 1980s but over the years have met only sporadically, says Randall Jacobs, acting secretary of the group. At the lawyer's association meeting in April, "the consensus was that we should proceed and become organized as part of MEDA," says Jacobs. "This will give us the kind of organizational continuity we haven't had before."

MEDA will handle administrative tasks and work with lawyers to plan activities. The first joint meeting is slated for the fall of 1997.

"We've been exploring ways to better serve specific professional groups," says Carol Suter, MEDA's vice president of member and resource development. Suter says the new arrangement makes a natural fit.

Happy second birthday. *Cusco, Peru (EMM)*—A singing group from the Angostura (Peru) Mennonite Church led by pastor Rubén Carasco (right) presented special music at the second anniversary celebration of the founding of the San Francisco Mennonite Church in Cusco, Peru. The audience began crowding in downtown Cusco around 10 in the morning May 19—Quechua mothers with babies and Bibles slung on their backs, college students in blue jeans, farmers in plaid shirts and baseball caps. They came on foot, by taxi or bus, some from 20 miles away. The four Mennonite churches in and around the city of Cusco, a provincial capital of 250,000, spent the time worshiping, listening to a sermon by Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) president Richard Showalter, and having refreshments. "It's a tradition here," EMM worker Steve Gibbs explains. "Four times a year we meet for joint services to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of each of the four churches. It's important for us to know that we are part of something bigger, a conference of churches. Today it's San Francisco's turn."

The youngest of the four churches planted by EMM missionaries in Peru in the last 10 years, San Francisco has grown rapidly from a small cell in an outlying suburb of Cusco to a vigorous group of about 60 believers meeting in the downtown area of the former capital of the old Inca empire.—*Jewel Showalter*

- **'Youth Stewards' begins.** Twenty young adults from five continents will be chosen to work as "Youth Stewards" at India 1997, the next Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly. The program provides travel subsidies to the January conference for people ages 18-30 representing MWC member churches. They will prepare the Global Church Village display area of the conference. Applications for North Americans interested in the program are available from the MWC office at 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1 Canada.

- ***Adult Bible Study* goes online.** An electronic update to supplement *Adult Bible Study* premieres on Aug. 24. *Adult Bible Study OnLine* will provide relevant information written closer to the date of the weekly lesson than the regular version that is prepared months in advance. The update will include information from various writers that connects with current events and life experiences. The service is available each week before the actual date of the lesson at http://www.mph.lm.com/abs.html

- **Mental health scholarships available.** College or graduate students pursuing careers in mental health fields in Canada and the U.S. are invited to apply for scholarships to be awarded for the 1997-98 school year. The scholarships, between $1,000-$2,000, are available from the Elmer Ediger Memorial Scholarship Fund. Applications are available from Amy Herr, Mennonite Health Services, 2160 Lincoln Highway East, Box 6, Lancaster, PA 17602-1150; or from Irma Janzen, MCC Canada Mental Health and Disabilities Program, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9.

- **New appointments:**

Terry Sawatsky, Africa co-secretary, Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Dennis and Sheri Brooks began a three-month home leave on June 7. They serve with EMM in Lithuania.

Allen and Mary Ellen Eshleman and their son Josue arrived in the United States on May 15 after 12 1/2 years with EMM in Guatemala. Their address is c/o Mahlon Eshleman, 2957 Warmspring Rd, Chambersburg, PA 17201.

Bruce and Joyce Heckman and their three children began a three-month home leave on June 1 from their EMM term in the Middle East.

Jeannie and Joe Lockinger and their three children arrived in the United States in March after eight years with EMM in Cusco, Peru. Their address is 820 College Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Marcus Sollenberger returned to the United States May 23 after one year with EMM and Wycliffe Bible Translators in Brazil. His address is 21 E. Siddonsburg Rd., Dillsburg, PA 17019.

- **Coming events:**

Celebration of ministry of James Waltner, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Pa., July 28. Begins at 9:30 am.

Chicago Mennonite festival, sale, and quilt auction, Redeemer Lutheran Church Center, Elmhurst, Ill., Sept. 14. Benefits Chicago Mennonite Learning Center. More information is available from 847 895-3654.

Fellowship day and chicken barbecue, Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa., Sept. 14. Tickets and information are available from 717 569-3271.

Annual meeting, Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians, Maple Glen Mennonite Church, Sept. 20-21. Focuses on the life, work, and influence of Menno Simons. More information is available from 301 895-4488.

Bible literacy retreat, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Sept. 20-22. Stanley Shenk, Del and Char Glick, Levi Miller, and Myron Augsburger will lead the weekend. More information from 800 839-1021.

Youth leaders' convocation, Rosedale Bible Institute, Irwin, Ohio, Sept. 27-29. Focuses on equipping youth leaders for ministry, leadership development, trends among today's youth, and development of goals and programs for youth. More information and registration are available from 614 857-1311.

'Making friends through story and song: many pieces becoming one peace,' a conference for children grades 3-8 and adults who work with children, Bluffton (Ohio) College, Nov. 1-3. Sponsored by Ohio Conference, Central District Conference, Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center, and Bluffton College. Registration deadline is Aug. 16—Aug. 1 for a discount in fees. More information is available from 419 358-3361.

- **New books:**

Entrepreneurs in the Faith Community: Profiles of Mennonites in Business by Calvin Redekop and Benjamin W. Redekop tells the stories of Mennonites in business. Explores the tension between business and Christian ethics. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

- **New resources:**

Ekklesia Peacemaking: Healing and Hope is a new video that features an in-depth look at a

Workers participate in orientation. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Thirty-nine workers participated in orientation at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters in Akron, Pa., June 18-28. Nineteen of those are affiliated with the Mennonite Church. They are:

Seated on floor (left to right): (Abe Denner); Dean Denner, community development worker, Little Buffalo, Alta.; (Emma Denner); Cia Verschelden, community development worker, Little Buffalo, Alta.; (John Denner).

Seated in chairs in first row: Ruby Schrock to Selibe Phikwe, Botswana; Kate Kooker, information manager of Selfhelp Crafts of the World, Akron, Pa.; Mary Helen Richer, English teacher in Hoa Binh, Vietnam; (Julien Martin-Koop); Deborah Martin-Koop, personnel and logistics coordinator, Tramelan, Switzerland; (Anna-Laure Martin-Koop, Pierre-Joël Martin-Koop).

Third row standing: Joe Schrock, carpentry instructor, Selibe Phikwe, Botswana; Janice Horning, server at Nav Jiwan International Tea Room, Ephrata, Pa.; (Patty Denner); Miriam Burkholder, health educator, Belle Glade, Fla.; Susan Reesor, community development promoter, Prey Veng, Cambodia; Melodie Wenger, product design worker, Hanoi, Vietnam; Susan Burkholder, community development worker, Guatemala.

Fourth row standing: Karen and David Ewert, English teachers, Luoyang, China; Paul Burkholder, sheltered workshop worker, Belle Glade, Fla.; Wendell Zeiset, truck driver, Akron, Pa.; Howard Wenger, product design worker, Hanoi, Vietnam; Robert Martin-Koop, personnel and logistics coordinator, Tramelan, Switzerland; (Jonathan Martin-Koop); Alan Burkholder, community development worker, Guatemala.

painful church split and reconciliation in India. Second in a series from Mennonite World Conference. Available from Mennonite Board of Missions media department, 800 999-3534.

• **Job openings:**

Chief executive officer, Mennonite Home, Lancaster, Pa. Qualifications include Pennsylvania NHA license, minimum of five years leadership experience (preferably in health care operations), and strong communication and organizational skills. Send résumé and salary history to assistant administrator, 1520 Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601.

Sixth-grade teacher, Belleville (Pa.) Mennonite School. Contact Ray Baker at 717 935-2184.

Teaching positions, Academia Menonita, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Openings in elementary, junior high, and senior high. Classes begin Aug. 22. Fax résumé to 215 723-5299.

• **Change of address:**

Elaine and Linford Martin, 12401 CR 20, Middlebury, IN 46540.

NEW MEMBERS

East Union, Kalona, Iowa: Derek Bontrager and Galen Bontrager.

New Holland, Pa.: Katie Brown, Kimberly Jackson, Jennifer Kratz, Heather Martin, and Joel McFadden.

Peace, Elyria, Ohio: Christopher Denlinger, Tom Gientkowski, Kay Gientkowski, Dee Hall, Kevin Jones, Marcia Jones, Richard Keller, and Tina Squire.

Pearl River, Philadelphia, Miss.: Jimmy Isaac, Geraldine Isaac, Laythen Jim, and Kayla Jim.

Shore, Shipshewana, Ind.: Marlene Bontrager, Howard Lehman, and Daniel Yoder.

Whitestone, Hesston, Kan.: Howard and Martha Hershberger.

Zion, Archbold, Ohio: Ron Guengerich, Ruth Guengerich, and Lisa Guengerich.

Zion, York, Pa.: Gretchen Krimmel and Lynne Spangler.

BIRTHS

Arn, Robin and Nathan, Round Lake Park, Ill., Jacob Isaac (second child), June 7.

Beiler, Gina Lugar and Daryl, Mifflinburg, Pa., Sadie Anna (fourth child), June 25.

Bender, Judy and Loren, New Holland, Pa., Christy Lynn (second child), Nov. 2, 1995.

Blosser, Brenda Going and Vernon Dale, Wichita, Kan., Laura Elisabeth (second child), March 12.

Brenneman, Mary Forney and Tony, Parnell, Iowa, Liza Jane (second child), June 21.

Brunner, Pamela Landis and Andrew, Telford, Pa., Levi Nash (first child), June 16.

Buller, Kim Janzen and Tim, Salina, Kan., Zachary Janzen (first child), June 10.

DeWild, Jody Gingerich and Michael, Coralville, Iowa, Abbie Rae (first child), June 25.

Fabiani, Julie Anders and Joseph, Telford, Pa., Alexa Brooke (first child), June 16.

Hershberger, Marjorie Coblentz and Joe, Uniontown, Ohio, Rachel Marie (second child), June 15.

Keezel, Louann Kindig and Jeffrey, Dover, Pa., Jessica Lee (third child), May 6.

Kiser, Kimberly Dunacusky and Todd, Telford, Pa., Katie May (second child), June 8.

Kratz, Sherry Anders and Leon, Harleysville, Pa., Austin Tyler (third child), July 2.

Leid, Colleen and Scott, New Holland, Pa., Ryan David (first child), Dec. 7, 1995.

Litwiller, Becky Armstrong and Jon, Washington, Iowa, Jacayla Rebecca (second child), June 26.

Shreiner, Katharine Mast and Robert L., Mishawaka, Ind., Conrad Mast (first child), June 28.

Weaver, Janice and Darryl, Willow Street, Pa., Garrett Evan (first child), Jan. 13.

Wesselhoeft, Leah Jenks and Conrad, Logan, Ohio, Reggie Lane (fifth child), July 2.

White, Melody and Bruce, Newton, Kan., Zebulon Allen (second child), June 24.

Yoder, Nancy Burkhardt and Kyle, Elkhart, Ind., Trent Cameron (second child), June 18.

MARRIAGES

Amstutz-Boschmann: Lon Amstutz, Indianapolis, Ind. (Kidron), and Heidi Boschmann, Indianapolis, Ind. (First), June 29, by Ryan Ahlgrim.

Beck-Landes: Eric Beck, Elkhart, Ind. (Belmont), and Susan Landes, Harrisonburg, Va. (Harrisonburg), July 6, by Wayne North.

Bonville-Call: Charles K. Bonville, Grants Pass, Ore. (Lebanon), and Leanne E. Call, Lebanon, Ore. (Lebanon), Feb. 14, by C. H. Cooper.

Brown-Bieber—Reinford: Kirsten Brown-Bieber, Fredericksburg, Va. (United Church of Christ), and Darrel Reinford, Lancaster, Pa. (Witmer Heights), May 27, by Charles Bieber.

Davis-Krehbiel: Melissa Davis, Hesston, Kan. (United Methodist), and Chad Krehbiel, Wichita, Kan. (Whitestone), July 6, by Jerry Weaver.

Gagliardino-Shelly: Karen Marget Gagliardino, Bridgeville, Pa. (Catholic), and R. Lucas Shelly, Sellersville, Pa. (Blooming Glen), June 29, by John Dinello and Truman H. Brunk, Jr.

Gingerich-Lindberg: Lori Gingerich, Hesston, Kan. (West Union), and Jeff Lindberg, Hesston, Kan. (Whitestone), June 15, by Ronald Guengerich.

Hilty-Kauffman: Peggy Hilty, Huber Heights, Ohio (Huber), and Charles Kauffman, Beavercreek, Ohio (Huber), June 21, by Joe Wood and Paul Conrad.

Janzen-Nance: Chad Janzen, Wichita, Kan. (Whitestone), and Rhonda Nance, Wichita, Kan. (Westside Christian), July 6, by Randy Smith.

Jones-Schueck: Barbara Jones, Pottstown, Pa. (Boyertown), and Michael Schueck, Gilbertsville, Pa. (Boyertown), May 25, by Alvin Detweiler.

Jones-Sutter: Rolonda Jones, Orrville, Ohio, and David Sutter, Orrville, Ohio, June 8, by Clarence Sutter, grandfather of the groom.

Klaassen-Martin: Glenn Klaassen, and Rochelle Martin, Chicago, Ill. (Lombard), May 18, by Rich Priva.

Litwiller-Meyer: Mike Litwiller, Kalona, Iowa (West Union), and Liz Meyer, Tiffon, Iowa (United Methodist), June 29, by Furman Gingerich.

Martin-Stoltzfus: Earl Ray Martin, East Earl, Pa. (Conestoga), and Christina S. Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, Pa. (Ridgeview), June 29, by Harvey Stoltzfus.

McClemens-McGee: Jason McClemens, Sidman, Pa. (Baptist), and Tracy McGee, Johnstown, Pa. (Kaufman), June 22, by Donald Sharp.

McDanel-Yoder: Diana McDanel, Davidsville, Pa. (Baptist), and Keith Yoder, Davidsville, Pa. (Kaufman), June 29, by Donald Sharp.

Morales-Zimmerman: Everardo Morales, East Earl, Pa. (New Holland Spanish), and Jennifer Zimmerman, East Earl, Pa. (New Holland), April 27, by Clyde G. Kratz.

Nitzsche-Snyder: Lori Nitzsche, Tempe, Ariz. (Whitestone), and Sam Snyder, Glendale, Ariz. (Trinity), June 29, by Stan Shantz.

Peterson-Steckly: Cali Peterson, Parnell, Iowa (Presbyterian), and Mark Steckly, Parnell, Iowa (West Union), June 15, by Forest Krummel.

Schnitkey-Short: Lindsey Schnitkey, Archbold, Ohio (Lutheran), and Ryan Short, Archbold, Ohio (Zion), June 29, by Ron Guengerich.

Snyder-Trost: Darryl Snyder, Plain City, Ohio (Church of the Brethren), and Melissa Trost, New Carlisle, Ohio (Huber), June 15, by Scott Cooper and Paul Conrad.

DEATHS

Denlinger, Verna E. Hostetter, 72, Gap, Pa. Born: July 24, 1923, to Galen B. and Susie K. Hershey Hostetter. Died: April 21, 1996, Gap, Pa., of a stroke. Survivors—husband: Roy D. Denlinger; children: Geraldine Frey, Janice Bricker, Suetta Grove, Darlene Meyers, Karen Lehman, Marlin R., Ronald R.; brother and sisters: G. Hershey, Eleanor Hershey, Virginia Neff, Sara Buckwalter, Lydia Denlinger, Elverta Horst, Emma Ranck. Funeral and burial: April 24, Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, by Robert Cahill, Nelson L. Martin, and Richard Buckwalter.

Grimm, Beverly Plank, 46, Lancaster, Ohio. Born: Jan. 23, 1950, Lancaster, Ohio, to Roy S. and Mildred Norris Plank. Died: June 16, 1996, Lancaster, Ohio. Survivors—son: Gregory; brother and sisters: Stephen Plank, Vera Reed, Roberta Moore. Funeral and burial: June 20, Turkey Run Mennonite Church, by Carl J. Wesselhoeft and Robert Fisher.

Lane, Eula Mae, 79, Toledo, Ohio. Born: Feb. 12, 1917, Hannibal, Mo., to Clarence and Margaret Doolin Lane. Died: June 20, 1996, Toledo, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—daughter: Bonnie Walker; sister and brother: Laura Burr, Gilbert Ramsey; 16 grandchildren, 39 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: husband and daughter. Funeral: June 25, Bancroft Mennonite Church, by Phil Ebersole. Burial: Woodlawn Cemetery.

Nyce, Hattie G. Ruth, 86, Harleysville, Pa. Born: May 8, 1910, Morwood, Pa., to Norman G. and Alverda Godshall Ruth. Died: June 23, 1996, Sellersville, Pa. Survivors—son: Arlen R.; sisters and brothers: Ida G., Lillian G. Fretz, Helen G. Landis, LeRoy G., Merrill G.; 7 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Henry N. Nyce (husband) and Lorraine Derstine (daughter). Funeral: June 28, Peter Becker Community Chapel, by John Ehst, Earl Yoder, and Floyd Hackman. Burial: Franconia Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Oberholtzer, Isaac "Ike" H., 61, Newport News, Va. Born: Nov. 3, 1934, Lancaster, Pa. Died: June 22, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Betty Yoder Oberholtzer; children: Roger, Brenda O. Snead, Bradley; sisters: Audrey Tison, Mary Ellen Flory; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: June 26, Huntington Mennonite Church, by G. Edwin Bontrager and Gerald Showalter. Burial: Warwick River Cemetery.

Snyder, M. Glennys Snider, 89, Cambridge, Ont. Born: April 24, 1907, Detroit, Mich., to Unias S. and Nancy C. Shantz Snider. Died: June 30, 1996, Cambridge, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—sisters: Twilah M., Esther L. Predeceased by: Edward G. Snyder (husband). Funeral and burial: July 3, Wanner Mennonite Church, by Eric Hiebert Rempel.

Tiessen, Gerhard, 81, Kalona, Iowa. Born: March 28, 1915, Tiege, Ukraine, to Johann and Anna Lammert Tiessen. Died: June 27, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—wife: Grace Miller Tiessen; son: John; sister: Maria Isaak; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: June 30, Kalona Mennonite Church, by David Groh and Scott Swartzendruber. Burial: Sharon Hill Cemetery.

Weaver, Ethel Wingard, 81, Blue Ball, Pa. Born: April 30, 1915, Johnstown, Pa., to Robert and Katie Blough Wingard. Died: June 25, 1996, Honey Brook, Pa. Survivors—children: Louetta Hurst, Ronald G., Leslie C.; sisters and brothers: Grace Yoder, Betty Lou Petersheim, Glenn Wingard, Carl Wingard; 5 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Walter B. Weaver (husband). Funeral: June 28, Forest Hills Mennonite Church, by Herman Glick and J. Lester Graybill. Burial: Eby Cemetery.

Weaver, John L., 68, Middlebury, Ind. Born: Oct. 2, 1927, LaGrange County, Ind., to Levi and Lizzie Mast Weaver. Died: June 18, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Mary Weirich Weaver; children: Carla Stanton, Marilyn Smith, Bonnie Woodward; brothers and sisters: Dan, Jonas, Clarence, Sam, Mary Schrock, Susan Kuhns; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: June 22, First Mennonite Church, by Joe Slabach and John F. Murray. Burial: Grace Lawn Cemetery.

Westover, Etta Nofziger, 83, Lebanon, Ore. Born: Jan. 27, 1913, Hubbard, Ore., to Samuel and Hannah Roth Nofziger. Died: June 23, 1996, Lebanon, Ore. Survivors—children: LeRoy, Leonard, Gene, Kenneth, Norma Kropf, Leona McKenzie, Kathleen Borkholder; 20 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Norman Westover (husband). Funeral and burial: June 26, Fairview Mennonite Church, by Roy Hostetler and Clarence Gerig.

Yoder, Grace Naomi Smeltzer, 86, Shipshewana, Ind. Born: June 19, 1910, Wakarusa, Ind., to Samuel and Salome Burkey Smeltzer. Died: July 1, 1996, Goshen, Ind., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—children: Janet, Marion; 3 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ora M. Yoder (husband), Leon (son), and Elaine (daughter). Funeral and burial: July 3, Shore Mennonite Church, by Carl Horner.

Newspaper

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THE LAST WORD

Through North Dakota. On Amtrak.

Ever since I could make the choice, my favorite way to travel has been train. I'll take the swaying of a Superliner car on the Capitol Limited any day over a Boeing 737 in "friendly" skies, even if there is no "mild turbulence."

I don't have lots of company. Statistics say most of us go by plane these days, too much in a hurry, too scheduled to trust ourselves to Amtrak—though the last train I took was only two hours late. That came on the last leg of a six-day, cross-country train ride my wife, Emily, and I treated ourselves to when a combined business and vacation trip took us from Pennsylvania to the West Coast.

If the general population doesn't travel by train, the "plain people" do. I've never yet been on a train that didn't carry some of them. They travel in coach, never in the lounge, seldom in the diner. But this trip a "plain man" was eating breakfast at the table across from us as the Empire Builder kept a 90 mph pace through North Dakota.

"Are you Amish?" asked the couple eating with him. "No," he answered, and then the noise from a bad rail joint kept me from hearing the rest—though I would have guessed him to belong to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite or the River Brethren.

"What do you believe?" was the next question. Again, noise drowned out his answer—and I was too polite to lean over to hear!

But my mind went back to the annual sessions of the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, which I had attended a few days previously at Salem, Ore. There PNMC conference minister Larry Hauder had preached from 1 Peter. "One characteristic of God's people is that we are persons in exile," Hauder said. "We are homeless, in conflict with our culture." Hauder then reiterated Peter's words about being strangers and pilgrims, separate, holy, called out, set apart.

What does that mean for today? "My generation doesn't really know," said Hauder. "We are systematically unraveling Mennonite distinctives, such as simplicity, plain dress, and nonviolence. But we haven't found anything to take their place." Hauder could well have said his words apply not just to one generation but to the entire church.

Of course, there are many ways to interpret the "plain period" in the life of the Mennonite Church. Lasting not even a century, this was supposed to have been a time when God's people kept themselves "unspotted from the world," separated from the culture that produced the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and World Wars I and II.

But—to listen to the stories now—for many of us this was also a time of oppression within, more about control than distinctiveness, power than simplicity. At the very least it wasn't about mission—usually.

And yet I became painfully aware, on Amtrak, through North Dakota, that no one was asking me what I believed. No one wanted to know what group I belonged to. I thought I too was simply dressed, but a pair of Khakis and a polo shirt don't make one separate these days.

Larry Hauder's questions are worth pondering: How are we different from the world? What does it mean today to be separate?

My favorite answer is that, in addition to accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord, we believe in a lifestyle of peace and nonviolence. Yet that's hard to make visible when our country is not involved in a major war. Those who try to do so through such means as refusing to pay "war taxes" we generally dismiss as too zealous in making discipleship practical.

Or we say we try to live simply. If we're honest, we'll have to admit that usually means our vacation homes are a little less ostentatious and our cruises a bit shorter than those of the majority in our society.

Separation and distinction are not things we should seek for their own sake. But speaker after speaker at PNMC kept noting that *separate* is something Peter took for granted in his book, directed to Christians living in an alien culture. And I also heard a lot at PNMC about the secularization of North American society—a few even called it "pagan."

If that is true, we need to ask ourselves: How are we Christians different from our non-Christian neighbors? What is it that distinguishes us as the people of God?

To not ask these questions—constantly, every day—will be to find ourselves simply going along with whatever happens around us. Traveling through North Dakota. On Amtrak. No one asking—or even caring—what it is we believe.—*jlp*

July 30, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

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"Jesus Christ is Lord"

The place to begin Mennonite theology

If the implications of this simple confession provided a norm for our living, the positive emphases of both evangelicals and social action types would be included.

by Thomas Finger

"Theology" is a frightening word for many Mennonites. It seems to designate a highly abstract, specialized, mind-numbing discipline. In reality, however, theology is a living activity that every Christian carries on in some way or other.

Theology is the process of deciding what you really believe, where your basic focus in life is, and on what you stake your life and daily actions. Every Christian has an implicit theology—a set of convictions as to what the world is like and what actions are right (even if they are not clearly thought out). Scholarly, explicit theology is mostly tracing out of the implications of these basic convictions with reference to Scripture and other theologies.

Two kinds of convictions are common among Mennonites. The most important conviction for many Mennonites is that Jesus Christ is their personal Savior. Many of them are called "evangelicals." If people begin with this conviction, what other kinds of beliefs, whether implicit or explicit, do they likely hold? What

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Shirley Bustos:
The right words 4

Mark Thiessen Nation:
Are we losing our moorings while gambling with our souls? 6

Volunteers rebuild church in center of media storm 9

From 007 to ardent pacifist:
Former officer joins Mennonites . . . 11

We need to emphasize our own Mennonite distinctives—though not out of proportion to other beliefs—for they are our particular contribution to all those who seek the truth of Christ.

sorts of theological doctrines do they affirm?

Mennonites of this kind almost certainly stress that Jesus Christ is divine. He would have to be—otherwise, how could he possibly be the source and focal point of their saving communion with God? Second, people of this sort think seriously about things that facilitate communion with God: prayer, Bible study, spiritual exercises. Perhaps they theologize about some further direct experience of God—perhaps some second blessing by the Spirit. Finally, they think about their eternal life with God and likely theologize about heaven or about what historical events will lead to Jesus' return.

Such persons might not emphasize Jesus' concrete, human life and teachings as much as his divinity. They may not theologize about the church, since their communion with God is largely individual. And with their attention focused on the future, they might not ponder greatly the complexities of social and ethical decision-making in the present.

For other Mennonites, the most important conviction is that Jesus is their ethical guide. They are often identified as "social action" Christians. Their conviction leads them to stress things that "evangelicals" might minimize.

Such Mennonites are very concerned about Jesus' human ministry; they want to know exactly what he did and taught. They usually think much about the church, for it is in this community that Jesus' way is to be lived out. And they theologize about what social and ethical decisions are appropriate in our complex modern world. Yet they may give little thought to the things "evangelicals" stress: Christ's deity, personal religious experience, and the eschatological future.

There are, of course, many exceptions to both of these tendencies. And it is significant that these second, "social action," beliefs are the kind that Anabaptists stressed, in contrast to most other denominations. The beliefs on the first list are shared by many varieties of Christians.

Some Mennonites think that one should begin our theology by stressing beliefs shared with other Christians (though perhaps with a more "ecumenical" and less "evangelical" list). Such people apparently fear that if Mennonites do not, they risk becoming a mere social action society and not really a religious group. Others, however, want to begin with the second kind of themes. They fear that if Mennonites do not, our distinctive emphases will be diluted and lost.

But might there be another starting point—one which, if consistently followed out in thought and practice, would overcome these divisions which split Mennonites? Maybe we could begin with the simple affirmation: "Jesus Christ is Lord." Many scholars believe that this brief phrase formed the very earliest Christian confession (e.g., Phil. 2:11, Rom. 10:9).

I am amazed at what a profound range of meaning is encapsulated in these few words.

"Jesus" refers to the concrete, historical human being from Nazareth. To confess, "Jesus Christ is Lord," means that all of his life and teaching carry authority for Christian practice. "Christ," however, means "Messiah," and for Christians this includes his saving functions. To confess, "Jesus Christ is Lord," means to personally appropriate his atoning death, his life-giving resurrection, and his renewing work through the Spirit.

To confess "Jesus Christ is Lord" has several meanings. It means that I make him sovereign over every phase of my personal life. But it also means that he is Supreme Ruler over the universe; that his will is to be followed in every dimension of the social and environmental realms. Moreover, "Lord" indicates Jesus' deity because "Lord" was the primary Old Testament name for God.

This confession also expresses well the focus of Anabaptist faith. Anabaptists certainly stressed that Jesus' actual teachings must be followed. This was only possible, however, through appropriating Christ's death and resurrection and by being renewed through participation in his divine nature ("divinization"). And Anabaptists insisted that all of life, both personal and public, must come under his lordship.

If the full implications of this simple confession provided a norm for our living and a starting point for our theology, the positive

emphases of both "evangelicals" and "social action" types would be included. Yet it would not provide an innocuous, flabby, compromise formula. This affirmation would sharply challenge some practices of both kinds of Mennonites.

For example, if Jesus Christ is Lord, one cannot (as some "evangelicals" do) stress individual conversions and sometimes even church membership without stressing Jesus' particular teachings and hope that they might somehow be absorbed later. To preach Jesus means that the full range of his teachings must be considered, including his way of peace. It also means that theology cannot focus on Jesus' deity or atonement in a way that makes his distinctive teachings secondary.

On the other hand, if Jesus Christ is Lord, one cannot (as some "social action" Mennonites do) present some ethical teachings as the sum and substance of Christian life. Personal relationship to Jesus as living, active Savior and Lord is essential to being Christian. Nor can theology focus on Jesus' distinctive teachings in a way that minimizes the significance of his deity and personal saving power.

Although I believe that Anabaptist-Mennonites have best expressed the full meaning of "Jesus Christ is Lord," all Christians would affirm this confession. So how does Mennonite theologizing relate to other kinds of Christian theology?

The aim of Mennonite theologizing, I think, should be to articulate views that are thoroughly Christian and not just culturally Mennonite. I know no better norm or standard for deciding what is truly Christian than Scripture. Yet the sources from which different Christian groups derive their theology include not only Scripture but also their own particular life experiences. Because different groups have had different experiences, they tend to single out different things as important and to express things that they believe in common with other groups in different ways.

First, given the variety of experiences among Christians, Mennonites should not only critique other theologies but also learn from them. Others may have learned and emphasized different biblically valid things than we have, and they may have expressed some things that we have learned in insightful, helpful ways. Anabaptist-Mennonites have done very little thinking on some important biblical themes like creation and the Lord's Supper. We can learn much from others, even if we don't agree with all they say.

Mennonites can also learn many positive things about Christology from the process which led to the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds (A.D. 325 and 461). It is far too simplistic to write off these creeds as "Constantinian" because they reached final form after the Roman emperors began favoring the church. The discussions which led to them began centuries before in the church of the oppressed and the martyrs. These creeds can help articulate the cosmic, divine side of Jesus' lordship. Of course, Jesus' ethics, which the creeds do not stress, must also shape any adequate theology of his lordship.

Second, we should recognize that some other Christians have affirmed some of what we call Mennonite "distinctives." Others in history, for instance, have sought to follow Jesus' way of peace. Maybe some have done better, or are doing better, than we. Moreover, times have changed since the Reformation. For example, most major denominations have crafted peace positions of some sort during the last decade or so. Many kinds of theology refer to Jesus as the radical norm for Christian behavior.

To divide all theologies into a "Constantinian" or "Christendom" approach and an Anabaptist one is far too easy. Mennonite theologians need to read other theologians carefully to find out what they really are saying. Where we find real convergences, let us rejoice. Yet this need not exclude careful critique—especially when other positions sound like ours but really say something significantly different.

Finally, we should keep affirming those distinctives that have been perceived through Anabaptist-Mennonite experience and are truly biblical. These distinctives should even shape the way we articulate beliefs which others affirm. We need to emphasize these distinctives—though not out of proportion to other beliefs—for they are our particular contribution to all who seek to embrace Christ's truth. Yet we should recommend them because they are truly and fully Christian and not simply because they happen to express our tradition.

Tom Finger is professor of systematic and spiritual theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

The right words

My foot kicks a stone
on the long path to the house
of the bereaved.
Searching frantically
through a maze of words,
my mind snatches phrases
appropriate for the occasion.

"I'm sorry about your loss,"
I rehearse to the red geraniums
lining the walkway.
"I'll be praying for you,"
I whisper to the sparrow
bathing unashamedly
in the concrete birdbath.
It's hard to ring the doorbell
when I'm not coming for coffee
or borrowing eggs.

The open door reveals
the tear-stained face
of my neighbor.
I thrust forward
the warm loaf of bread
and bite the quivering lip.
"I came to cry with you,"
will suffice.

—Shirley Bustos

Shirley Bustos is a member of the Valparaiso (Ind.) Mennonite Church, where her husband Mario serves as pastor. She teaches elementary music in the Portage (Ind.) school system and is currently studying music composition at Valparaiso University. Shirley and Mario are the parents of three sons.

***"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God."*—Rom. 8:38-39**

Gospel Herald

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The June 18 articles, ***Whose Name Do We Claim?*** and ***What's So Special About the Small Church?*** as well as the editorial, ***Why I Am a Mennonite*** relate closely to the congregation of which I am a member. This small congregation is composed of individuals from many different ethnic and denominational backgrounds.

Mennonite distinctions are not the only reason they attend. Nor do we have a monopoly on being a caring church. What people find in any church depends more on the specific congregation, not the denomination.

I am a Mennonite primarily because, as a young believer, I had no practical choice I could make to go to another church. As one who grew up in the Mennonite church and who appreciates its values, I still question whether "Mennonite" is a barrier or a help in bringing the gospel to those in spiritual need.

This dilemma will not easily be resolved as our denomination becomes less uniformly ethnic in its membership.

James Hershey
Bloomingdale, N.J.

What's in a Border? (June 25 and July 2). When we GC and MC folks allow the Canadian-U.S. border the significance of being an integration issue, we seem to ignore this reality: the body of Christ has neither national borders nor color or ethnic considerations.

Sam Hershberger
Glendale, Ariz

In the report, ***Scholars and Staff of Church-Related Organizations Contemplate Anabaptist Ideals and Market Realities*** (June 25), Ted Koontz is quoted as saying that "the real world of institutions is not hospitable to saints. . . . The real world is a world where one inevitably gets dirty hands."

The implication is that sainthood is impossible in institutional settings, a sentiment reported to have found a ready echo among participants at the Elizabethtown (Pa.) College conference.

In fact, Koontz was characterizing a position he does not support. His paper takes issue precisely with that assumption and argues forcefully that if there is to be any credibility in our Anabaptism—indeed to the gospel per se—then "sainthood" must find institutional expression in the real world.

At a time when "realism" is finding a ready ear within Mennonite institutional thinking, such exchanges as took place at Elizabethtown are crucial. And it is critically important that they are reported accurately.

Tom Yoder Neufeld
Waterloo, Ont.

I read with interest your report, ***Pacific Northwest Conference Integrates Missions into Total Structure*** (July 9). In it you say that "giving to a $120,000 budget of the former mission board is more than 50 percent behind."

I believe you have mistakenly read the budget for the new Evangelism and Mission Committee, compared apples with oranges, and reached an erroneous conclusion.

It is true that the total budget for this committee was $120,000. But that was for the entire year. The giving you reported was for ten months only. Actual giving by PNMC churches to missions for this period was 72 percent of the budget, not the less than 50 percent which you reported. In addition, the committee received $7,700 in designated gifts for special projects.

It is true that we face a great challenge in funding the mission to which God is calling PNMC. However, I believe the distorted report creates a false and dismal impression of our actual situation. And it may cause discouragement rather than the joy and the hopefulness which is merited by the reality of the past year.

John M. Miller
PNMC missions minister
Tigard, Ore.

You printed a wise article in ***Are Christians Patriots? Should They Be?*** (July 2). As a pastor of mostly first-generation Mennonites, I especially value that Thiessen Nation showed from the first paragraphs that he understood the best thoughts of those veterans marching in the parade. Too often the Mennonite press portrays those who serve in the military with a broad brush, offending the very ones we ought to be in dialogue with!

I feel nourished by my reading of *Gospel Herald.*

Harold N. Miller
Corning, N.Y.

As I read the article, ***More Real Than My Own Body*** (July 9), I kept thinking about how cruel cancer is.

When my wife had cancer, she had the family and the church pray and annoint her with oil. Later she had chemotherapy and radiation, all to no avail. She eventually died.

Then two others contracted cancer, and again their families and the church prayed and annointed them with oil. They both recovered.

You wonder what God's purpose is with these three different cases. But whatever it is, I believe that God knows best.

Carroll Walter
Quakertown, Pa.

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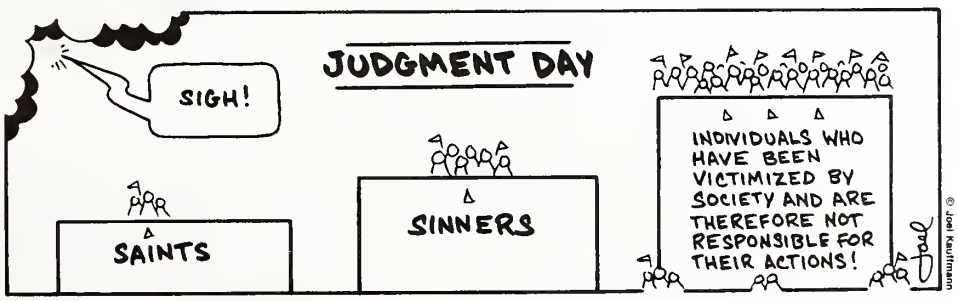
Pontius' Puddle



"Anchors away":

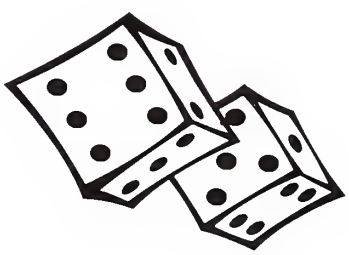
Are we losing our moorings while

Everyone seems to be discovering that gambling makes money, huge sums of money. As the business grows, few of our churches will go untouched by this evil.

by Mark Thiessen Nation

Gambling is "the new American pastime," some say; the United States has become a "nation of gambling." More than 125 million people visit casinos every year. They spend more than 360 billion dollars. In contrast, a mere 70 million people attend professional baseball games each year. To figure out how Christians should respond to this new climate of dice-rolling and lever-pulling, we must look carefully at the contemporary world of gambling.

In Gulfport, Miss., for example, casinos are still required to be dockside, on floating vessels. Apparently people feel that when the gambling casinos are at sea, needing anchor, they really are on the edge of the community and not at the center. But when the casinos say, "Anchors away!" and drift inland, will they *become* the anchors? Will the communities lose their moorings? Whatever the answer, when we ask today about gambling, we must not picture Doris and Gertrude spending $25 once a week at a local bingo hall. Melvin Simon, whose company helped build the huge Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn., predicts a day when casinos, not department stores, will be the anchors of the country's malls. Predicting even further "advances," CNN's Ted Turner has said, "it may be possible to undo existing anti-gambling laws in order to allow for full TV gambling in the future."



What is going on in our country that has caused The Wilson Quarterly, Newsweek, and The Nation to do recent cover stories on gambling? What has caused the National Council of Churches and the Christian Coalition to join forces to open a Washington office of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling?

What is going on, most simply, is that states, individual casino owners, and several Native American tribes are making large sums of money through gambling. Politicians can boast new tax revenues without raising taxes. Schools and other projects benefit. Jobs are created that are directly and indirectly connected to the casinos.

What is often not discussed, however, are "the devastating consequences and broken promises of America's gambling explosion," to borrow the subtitle of Robert Goodman's new book, *The Luck Business*.

Take Atlantic City, N.J., as an example. During the ten-year period after its casinos opened, more than 40 percent of the restaurants closed. Only four years after the introduction of casinos, about a third of the city's retail businesses also closed. Before casinos were introduced, Atlantic City's unemployment rate was 30 percent higher than the state average; ten years later it was 50 percent higher. Several studies indicate that these trends are not unique to Atlantic City.

But other hidden "taxes" spell out some of the devastating consequences. The poor are taxed because disproportionately more of their dollars go for gambling. Furthermore, our country is being taxed by the costs of the more than ten and one-half million compulsive gamblers. The yearly private and public costs for each problem gambler range between $20,000 and $30,000 in 1993 dollars, some estimates say. The American Insurance Institute also estimates that 40 percent of all white-collar crime stems from gambling. In addition, suicides, bankruptcies, divorces, incidents of embezzlement, occurrences of child abuse and neglect, and other vices and crimes all seem to rise within communities that have a significant casino presence.

So what does the Bible say about gambling? Should Christians gamble? And how do we minister in a gambling community?

The Bible says nothing directly on gambling. Even the passages about casting lots will not help much in the discussion. Perhaps the relevant teachings of the Bible can be best understood in light of the teachings on gambling throughout the history of the church. According to Reuven Brenner in *Gambling and*

gambling with our souls?

Speculation, "The early church fathers and councils clearly condemned gambling among all Christians." One sermon from a third century bishop said, "Stop being a dice player and start being a Christian. . . . Distribute your money to the poor before you allow it to be squandered by your unruly passions." Augustine said that "the devil invented gambling." Martin Luther called gamblers "thieves before God" and claimed their gains were won out of "self-interest and sinfulness." There has not been unanimity on the subject, however. Early in this century, for example, one Catholic church representative stated, "There is no eleventh commandment against gambling."

Among the Mennonite groups surveyed for *Anabaptists: Four Centuries Later,* in the early 1970s, 75 percent (80 percent of the Mennonite Church) thought gambling is "always wrong"; an additional 19 percent said it is "sometimes wrong." In *The Mennonite Mosaic,* from surveys of the late 1980s, 61 percent overall (and 65 percent in the Mennonite Church) thought gambling is "always wrong." No percentage is given for "sometimes wrong" in the newer survey, even though Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger indicate that "most of the shifts in attitude [generally] were between 'always wrong' and 'sometimes wrong.' "

(This may mean that attitudes about gambling among Mennonites have not significantly changed between the early 1970s and the late 1980s. Rather, the shift may reflect a widespread uneasiness in our culture with absolutes and with categories labeled "always.")

It seems that the Mennonite church represents fairly well, at least according to my sketchy survey, the drift of Christian attitudes over the centuries. But what Anabaptist convictions militate against gambling?

First, I must acknowledge one of my preoccupations: I believe that we must live honestly and faithfully in the present and not constantly fight demons of our pasts. Philip Yancey has said that "somehow Christians have gotten a reputation as anti-pleasure." For some of us that "somehow" is too vague. Many of us have known rigid, controlling, and legalistic parents and church leaders. Those pasts (and, for a few, presents) are very painful. And we ought never forget the temptations these attitudes and practices represent.

However, for most of us, living in the last few years of the twentieth century in the United States, these are not our chief temptations. All one needs to do is read about the spending and entertainment habits of baby boomers and their children to know that self-control and rigidity about morals are hardly our primary temptations.

And unlike forty years ago, we do not live in tight, ethnic Mennonite communities that shape who we are from birth to marriage to death. In this highly mobile and technologically saturated world, it is vital that we recapture the practices and character that make habits like gambling less of a temptation.

Balthasar Hubmaier, an early sixteenth-century Anabaptist leader, said, "Concerning community of goods, I have always said that everyone should be concerned about the needs of others, so that the hungry might be fed, the thirsty given to drink, and the naked clothed. For we are not lords of our possessions, but stewards and distributors." Over the years discipleship, nonconformity, simple living, mutual aid, charity, and Mennonite Disaster Service have been some of the ways of expressing, in word and deed, the con-

(continued on page 8)

The church must continue its teaching about money. We dare not allow gambling to give mammon a makeover by calling it "gaming" or "entertainment."

More central than the question of gambling is what we are teaching about money so that terms like simple living, mutual aid, and charity are an important part of our lives.

(continued from page 7)

victions articulated by Balthasar Hubmaier.

These convictions, Anabaptists have believed, were derived from the Scriptures. Anyone who has studied the Scriptures on wealth and poverty knows that there are a variety of teachings within the Bible. And in fact, within the Old Testament the "variety" at times seems contradictory.

But I believe, along with centuries of Anabaptists, that the New Testament texts move in the same direction. To paraphrase: give generously and sacrificially; the rich cannot enter heaven; trust in God for material well-being; do not be greedy; the love of money is the root of all evil; and love your neighbor as yourself. And though I would not want to reduce the Old Testament's variety to this teaching, a passage in Proverbs 30 clearly sounds Mennonite: "Give me neither poverty nor wealth, but provide me with the food I need, for if I have too much I shall deny you . . . and if I am reduced to poverty I shall steal and besmirch the name of my God" (Prov. 30:8-9).

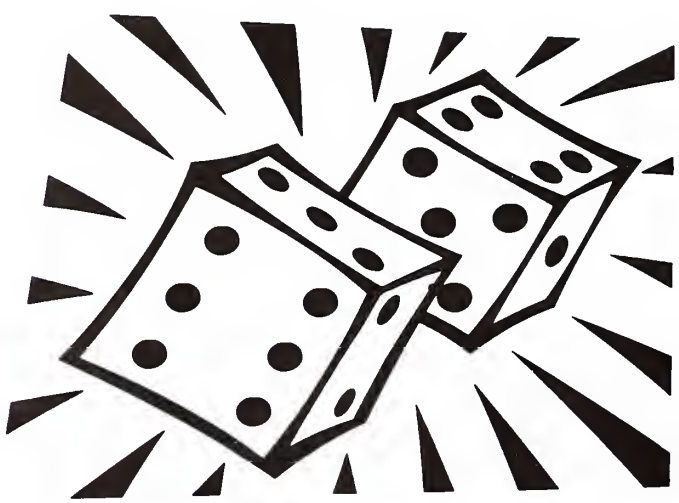
Undoubtedly immigrant Mennonites, such as my wife's parents, quite literally prayed prayers like this—to survive and to live faithfully to their God. As relatively poor farmers, they also knew that hard work, patience, and frugality were necessities. These necessities were habits communicated as valuable by the lives they observed; they were habits of body and soul.

Perhaps more central than the question of whether Mennonites should gamble is the question of what we are teaching about money so that terms like simple living, mutual aid, discipleship, charity, and justice are substantively exhibited through our lives and passed on to the next generation. Someone has said that a culture that neglects to cultivate good habits will soon find itself the prisoner of bad habits. The gambling casino phenomenon is an obvious instance of how capitalism has corrupted our souls and our habits. Developing good habits that militate against such corruption is the chief task in ministering in a world so dominated by "the business of luck."

This in no way, however, minimizes the need for wisdom for church leaders and congregations who ask what it means to serve Native Americans or teachers who benefit from casinos; or what it means for contractors in a congregation who deal with casinos; or what it means for people who visit casinos occasionally or even become addicted. Nor is it to suggest that we ought ever to forget that our Lord was accused of associating with "the tax collectors and sinners."

Practical, local wisdom is always required. But it ought to be wisdom informed by the need to teach and embody the teaching of the church regarding mammon. And we ought not to allow the "gaming" industry to give mammon a makeover, as one person has put it. Gambling can come to be called "gaming" and "entertainment." But as gambling becomes ever more prominent and accessible, the alluring and idolatrous propensities of mammon are compounded. Riverboat casinos become dockside casinos become mall casinos become interactive television gambling.

Gambling has lost its moorings; its anchor is no longer safely at the fringe of our lives. The question is whether we will allow gambling to dislodge our loyalty to Christ, the one who tells us we cannot serve two masters. Will we lose our moorings? Will we gamble with our souls?



Mark Thiessen Nation is interim pastor at Glendale (Calif.) Church of the Brethren and is completing a doctorate at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is married to Mary and has two sons, ages 17 and 13. This article is based on a presentation he made to a consultation on gambling in Gulfport, Miss., last January sponsored by the United Native Ministries Council, Gulf States Mennonite Conference, and the Mennonite Board of Missions.

'Here we are in the limelight':
Mennonites help to rebuild Alabama church at center of media storm

Boligee, Ala.—Mennonite and Quaker volunteers working to rebuild three church buildings destroyed by arsonists have brought a near media frenzy to this tiny town.

The three hundred residents have been overwhelmed with the attention—as have the volunteers. The mayor alone has spoken with more than 100 reporters. According to Cornelius Driedger, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) project coordinator, "For us as Mennonites, we've always believed in not letting the right hand know what the left is doing; but here we are in the limelight."

While reporters cover the rebuilding, investigators from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms have come to search for a reason for the church fires that have occurred in the past eight months near this Greene County community. After weeks of questioning and research, they still have no answers.

Though there is no confirmed racial connection with the fires, racial tensions are evident in this county of 10,000 people.

Greene County's first African-American sheriff, George W. Hall, admits that there is a race problem in his county. Whites send their children to a private academy that is almost totally white. Blacks attend the poorly-funded public schools. Traditions remain of white and black gathering places, white and black churches, and white and black newspapers.

• • •

"The problem is we're not even attempting to work together," says Hall. "The whites deny that there is a problem. There is a problem when people burn down churches, when we have separate schools."

Hall points to the efforts of MDS as a model that may help the community to go beyond its walls of separation. "They came to build a church regardless of whether it was white or black," says Hall.

The Mennonite efforts have been seen as a glint of hope in the stories of tragic arson and ongoing racial tensions. Almost daily, reporters have trekked to the Mennonite encampment in the Alabama backwoods to tell the story through video, photos, and words.

Major U.S. media have been at the site, including *USA Today*, CBS, *U.S. News and World Report*, and dozens of others. Crews from Japan, the Netherlands, England, and Canada have also reported on the activities.

Jane Kuepfer of Seaforth, Ont., has served as office manager and youth co-director for MDS's work site. She believes it has been important for Mennonites to help the Mt. Zoar Baptist Church rebuild. With groups of 20-50 mostly white youth coming to work at the church site each week, MDS has set up a camp of trailers and recreational vehicles to serve as a home base. They have worked hard to remain servants of the congregation.

"They've seen us as non-threatening, letting them be the leaders," she says. The story of rebuilding has been good news in the middle of a bad story, Kuepfer says. "This is a strong Christian witness because that is what we are about—helping people to see the light of the good news in the midst of tragedy."

While the work of MDS has become big news, most importantly it seems that personal relationships have developed with Mennonites and this small black congregation. Members of the church are at the site daily, but a catfish fry on Tuesdays with church members and volunteers has become a weekly highlight.

• • •

The project is scheduled to end in August. After the media attention subsides and the Mennonites return north, Greene County will likely be left to itself. The questions about the fires will remain and many in the community will maintain their suspicions. Some accusations have already circulated on mismanagement of funds earmarked for church reconstruction in the local community. Some question the motives of the volunteers who have come to help rebuild. Driedger says, "History will tell if what we are doing here was right, though we are doing what we think is right for the present time."

The congregation hopes to have a dedication service in early September and will include green ribbons sent from Mennonite congregations that have helped the project. "I don't think this destroyed nobody," Mt. Zoar member Jackie Goodrum says. "Everybody was shocked, but we just meet at another church. Everybody is just waiting for the church to get finished and we'll be back here."—*Steve Kriss*

Making worship both faithful and appealing

Pittsburgh, Pa.—Church leaders from Anabaptist congregations across North America converged here June 14-16 to reflect on ways to make worship both faithful and appealing.

More than 200 people attended the New Life Assembly at Duquesne University, successor to the Evangelism Leaders Academy.

Plenary speaker Thomas Troeger, professor of preaching and communications at Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colo., led worshipers in a Friday evening service to remember their baptisms. The worship concluded with the worship leaders touching each person's forehead with a splash of water as they filed by the altar and received the encouragement to "remember their baptism and be faithful."

June Alliman Yoder leads a seminar.

June Alliman Yoder, associate professor of communication and preaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., led a service on Saturday evening designed for people who do not normally attend church. After the service, worshipers reflected on the experience in small groups to gain insight into planning worship in their home congregations.

Participants could attend three of 23 workshops offered.

"I appreciated the openness to different styles of worship and music," says Bob Kettering, coordinator of workshops and seminars for the Andrews Center, sponsor of the event. "This conference is a model for what needs to happen in our churches."—*Becky Baile Crouse*

Seminar examines how congregations work

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—How do seminary professors better understand the congregations for which they are preparing leaders? And how do church administrators better understand the congregations they serve?

To answer these questions, the Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS) organized a congregational studies seminar, June 6-11, at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Understanding how the gospel has taken shape in a particular congregation and how the congregation conceives and carries out its mission were primary objectives of the seminar. In order to come to this understanding, however, participants needed to learn effective methods of studying a congregation. "The main thing we learned was the method of congregational studies," Ross T. Bender, director of IMS, explains.

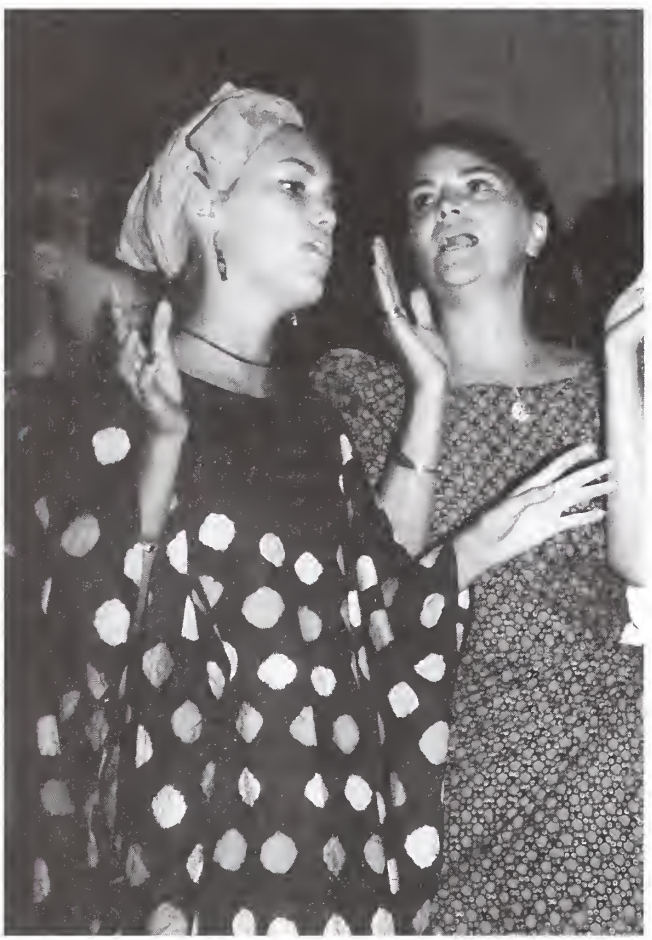
In-depth study. To learn this method, two local congregations were selected for in-depth study: Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, and Silverwood Mennonite Church, both in Goshen, Ind.

The study involved a variety of methods of research: results of a survey completed by members of the congregations, Sunday morning visits to the congregations, interviews with congregational leaders, census data, and interviews with local community leaders.

'Frames' for congregations. Participants in the seminar organized the information into reports which were then shared with the congregations' leaders. The reports gave the congregational leaders four "frames" for looking at their congregations: the community surrounding the church, the culture or identity of the congregation, the resources within the congregation (people, finances, facilities), and how the congregation processes decisions and gets things done.

Participants then grappled with questions of how these methods can be used by the seminar participants, which included conference and denominational leaders and seminary professors.

One outcome of the seminar, Bender says, is that as the learnings "spill over into our awareness, they will shape how we do theological education . . . we will take seriously these living organisms."—*Mary Klassen*



To the ends of the earth. *Syracuse, Ind. (MBM)*—Elizabeth (left) and Jeanette Krabill sing an African hymn during a worship service at an overseas seminar June 30-July 6. Some 60 new and returning Mennonite Board of Missions and Commission on Overseas Mission workers participated in the annual seminar at Oakwood Conference Center. The group spent time in worship, Bible study, discussion of mission issues, and relaxation.

The Krabills recently returned from Ivory Coast, West Africa.

Peace Council makes plans for 'Assembly Gathered'

Elkhart, Ind. (MWC)—The first meeting of Mennonite World Conference's Peace Council in Calcutta during India 1997 will focus on working together toward peaceful solutions in areas of unrest around the globe.

According to Paulus Widjaja, Peace Council secretary, every day during the Jan. 6-12 "Assembly Gathered," the Peace Council will hold a forum to discuss the problems that jeopardize peace for Mennonites nationwide.

Initiating international efforts. "Our hope is that by the end of the Assembly, we will have a sense of some of the problems we face as churches in various regions of the world and ways in which various churches are working at their peace problems," Widjaja says.

The Peace Council will sponsor two activities in Calcutta: a daily forum and exhibitions designed by churches and peace committees across the world. The daily forum will be 75 minutes long with a presentation from a continental resource person followed by a brief discussion time with participants.

For the exhibitions, Widjaja hopes it can become a "global village that displays peace issues from around the world." Widjaja and Judy Zimmerman Herr, associate secretary for the Peace Council, are inviting churches and peace committees to use mediums like folk dancing and dramas to share stories of peace work in their area and perhaps initiate international efforts.

For example, Widjaja notes, he hopes the Indonesian exhibit will highlight plans to build a nuclear power plant in an area predominantly populated by Indonesian Mennonites. "This decision [to build] isn't only an Indonesian government decision but also involves Japanese and German contractors," he says. "I hope we can bring international pressure to stop this building."

—*June Mears Driedger*

From 007 to ardent pacifist:
Former Army Reserve officer recounts journey to the Mennonite church

Los Angeles, Calif. (GCMC)—Tom Oliver's fascination with the military began when he was a diaper-clad toddler. In fact, he still has a photo of himself, as a youngster, wearing a plastic combat helmet and his dad's army boots.

By the time he was in ninth grade, Oliver had signed up for the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) in order to be on the fast track to a military career. "I was itching to join. I had learned that the most important events in history were wars," he recalls. "I wanted to be like James Bond, a killing machine who could make a bomb out of a toothpick."

Today, as a member of the Mennonite Church, Oliver has a much different take on the military. If anything, he wishes Mennonites would have a stronger peace witness.

'A rite of passage.' But in 1977, at the impressionable age of 14, Oliver had never heard of pacifists when he decided to join the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) at his junior high school in Denver. His role models came from within the Southern Baptist Church, where belonging to the military was virtually "a rite of passage" for men. "The youth pastors at my church all served in the military. I liked the idea that people in the military knew what they stood for," he says.

"I believed that if you live in a free country, you have to be willing to defend it. I never went to the Bible to support my views. I had American heroes instead," he says. "I had no questions about it. I thought it was something I was supposed to do."

Studying the Bible. Oliver joined the college-level ROTC not long after he graduated from high school at the age of 17. While he trained with the ROTC for one weekend a month and two weeks each summer, he also was enrolled at Metropolitan State College in Denver. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in communications in 1985. In the meantime, Oliver had finished his basic ROTC training and had been commissioned as a second lieutenant within the Army Reserve.

It was while his wife, Patti, was preparing a speech about the death penalty that the couple first began studying the Bible together in an in-depth manner. Oliver argued for the death penalty based on the Old Testament, while Patti argued against it based on the New Testament.

Soon they were reading three to four chapters of the Bible each evening and spending several hours discussing them. Two years later, after reading the entire Bible, the couple reached the conclusion that they were pacifists.

"It was scary for me to realize this because I was still in the army reserves. I thought if I declared myself as a conscientious objector, I might have to go to jail," says Oliver, noting that the military hadn't informed him of his right to leave. "They keep it a secret; otherwise, people would be leaving the military in droves."

During a trip to Ohio, the couple picked up some information on Mennonites at a Choice Books display in a restaurant. After reading the material, Tom and Patti realized they believed what Mennonites believed.

They began attending Mennonite churches as often as possible on their frequent business trips. When one Ohio pastor explained that Oliver could leave the military if he declared himself as a conscientious objector, he immediately filed the necessary paperwork to obtain this status. It took the military about nine months to process his papers.

In the meantime, the couple began attending Faith Mennonite Church, Downey, Calif. When the church approached Oliver about becoming an elder, he told them he wouldn't feel right about accepting that position or being a member until he was out of the military.

Different than other groups? Stanley Green, now the president of Mennonite Board of Missions, was Oliver's advocate on the day of his hearing before a military board. "God watched over me. Everything went smoothly," says Oliver.

Although Oliver thinks Mennonites have many vital projects related to pacifism, he would like to see the church do more.

"Too many Mennonites are trying to be like everyone else. Pacifism is one of the things that keeps us from being acculturated," he says. "A lot of Mennonites seem to be infatuated with the military."

"Mennonites used to wear distinctive dress. Mennonites used to believe in simple living. About all that is left anymore is peace," says Oliver. "If Mennonites abandon the peace stance, what makes us any different from other churches?"—*Carla Reimer*

Ireland workers describe 'dark, dangerous' times

Belfast, Northern Ireland—The current situation in Northern Ireland is "extremely dark, dangerous, often described as the worst in 26 years of the 'Troubles,' reminiscent of the most discouraging and devastating of times," according to Mennonite Central Committee workers John and Naomi Lederach. Escalating violence between the Orange Order (a Protestant fraternity whose members celebrate the victory of Protestants over Catholics 300 years ago), police, and Catholics is threatening the 22-month-old peace in the country. In the following excerpt from an MCC release, the Lederachs describe their experiences on July 13.—*Editor*

• • •

On Sunday morning we went first to a Catholic mass and later to a small Methodist worship service. About 150 people were seated in the sanctuary of the Clonard Monastery, a large Gothic building. A number of young girls helped with the mass. One of them read a prayer she had written that described how many of her friends were Protestants and how they used to go to the city center together, lamenting that this has all changed.

The elderly priest read a prayer appealing for peace and reconciliation, written by a Protestant. He gave his sermon on how we can continue to work for peace in spite of all that has happened this week.

The priest used the illustration of a Catholic father whose son was killed this past week, likely a sectarian killing. He quoted the father standing at the gravesite with a message to the world. "I forgive the ones who did the horrible killing of my son, and I plead with the community not to retaliate." He called for calm and forgiveness.

We wept again as we heard this plea and knelt in prayer as the congregation went forward for the sacrament.—*John and Naomi Lederach*

Lack of funds halts progress of AIDS residence

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—In Spain, where the rate of infection with the AIDS virus is the highest in Europe, Mennonites are walking with people who have nowhere else to turn.

Through members of the Burgos Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers Connie and Dennis Byler, former drug users and others diagnosed with AIDS are finding new hope in Christianity. For more than a year, members of the Burgos Mennonite Church have supported the Emmaus House, the church's ministry to those with AIDS.

Construction of a new facility that would house 10 people with AIDS has recently been halted, however, because of lack of funds.

Years ago, church members procured an abandoned toy factory in which they plan to open the Association of Christian Communities for the Rehabilitation of the Marginalized (ACCOREMA), a residence for people in the final stages of AIDS.

As of March, the church had raised almost half of the projected $100,000 required to build the residence. MBM contributed $10,000; the French Mennonite church gave $30,000. Another $1,000 came from the family of one man with AIDS who was cared for by church members before his death. Last month, $5,000 was donated by The Mennonite Foundation, Inc., from the Howard and Ethel G. Yoder Fund.

Until the funds are available and as more people diagnosed with AIDS come to the church for help, Connie Byler finds a place for them in the smaller Emmaus House.

A 'faithfulness' mentality. Becoming involved in an AIDS ministry was a simple choice for the church, the Bylers say. Nearly 10 percent of the congregation has been diagnosed with AIDS, most of them contracting it through intravenous drug use, all before becoming Christians and joining the church. It is estimated that 80 percent of people in drug-rehabilitation programs in Spain test positive for the virus that causes AIDS. Some of those infected with the virus show no symptoms, even after 14 years of living with the diagnosis, says Byler. But others who are infected do get sick and die. During 1995, six people with whom the church had contact or cared for in Emmaus House died of complications related to AIDS. Several of those were members of the Burgos church.

Despite the recent financial setbacks, the Burgos Mennonite Church and others will continue their efforts to open the ACCOREMA residence in the future. "I assume in God's plan it is necessary we keep slamming into obstacles while trying to put this ministry on solid financial footing," says Dennis Byler. "If things came too easily, we would end up with a success, rather than a faithfulness, mentality."
—Christy Risser

Mennonite woman jailed for army school protest

Ft. Benning, Ga.—A Mennonite woman was sentenced to a federal prison term for demonstrating against a U.S. military school that trains Latin American soldiers.

Jo Anne Lingle, a member of First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, Ind., was charged with criminal trespassing and sentenced to two months in prison for protesting in November to close the U.S. Army's School of the Americas, Ft. Benning, Ga. The facility is the training ground for Latin American and U.S. military personnel, many of whom were involved in civil wars in Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

"Christ said we are to follow him and we are to see him in the places where people are suffering, in the most marginalized places," Lingle said in an interview with the *Indianapolis Star*. "So I have to trust God with this."

Lingle and 12 others were part of an annual protest at Fort Benning on Nov. 16, 1995, to mark the murders of six priests and two women in El Salvador, allegedly by soldiers trained at the School of the Americas.

Sponsor of bill attends. U.S. representative Joseph P. Kennedy II from Massachusetts, the sponsor of the bill in Congress to close the school, attended the protesters' sentencing. "The most abusive torturers known in this hemisphere have one thing in common—they went to the School of the Americas," Kennedy said in an article in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Lingle's two-month prison term in Marianne, Fla., began May 31.
—from newspaper reports

This little light of mine. *Asheville, N.C.*—Roy Hunsberger, a member of Asheville (N.C.) Mennonite Church, carries the Olympic torch down a street in his hometown.

Hunsberger carried the torch on the 61st day of the 84-day journey of the Olympic flame from Los Angeles to Atlanta, Ga. Hunsberger was nominated by his coworkers as a "community hero" because of his volunteer work with Mennonite Disaster Service, the Alzheimer's Association, the local Buncombe County Christian Ministry, and his congregation.

At least two other Mennonites carried the torch on its way to the opening ceremonies on July 19—Arthur Roth, pastor of Julesburg (Colo.) Mennonite Church, and Donald Regier. Roth noted in a congregational newsletter that carrying the torch reminded him that he is also "a bearer of that greatest of all lights."
—Melanie Parks and Mennonite Reporter

- **Miller killed in TWA crash.** Gideon Miller of the Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., was one of 230 people killed in the TWA 747 explosion above the waters off Long Island on July 17. He worked as a pilot for TWA for over 30 years and was on his way to join a crew that would fly passengers from Paris back to New York. Miller is survived by his wife, Betty, and their two children, Mike and Carla. Memorial services were held at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., and at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church.

- **Workers commissioned.** Sixty-nine workers were commissioned by pastors, family, and friends to serve with Eastern Mennonite Missions during "Festival 96" on July 14. They will serve both overseas and in the United States.

- **MCC Canada downsizes.** Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada executives agreed to reduce the agency's budget by $300,000 for 1997-98 and to shift some responsibilities from MCC Canada to the provincial MCC organizations. In a meeting held May 31-June 1, the executive committee continued the restructuring process that was launched last November.

- **Nursing funds available.** Graduate students pursuing nursing careers are invited to apply for loans being offered by Mennonite Health Services and Mennonite Board of Missions. Available from the Miller-Erb Nursing Development Fund, the loans will be awarded for the 1997-98 school year. Awards range from $300 to $2,000 per study year with a limit of $4,000 to any one person. Application deadline is Feb. 1, 1997. Applications are available from Amy Herr, Mennonite Health Services, at 717 293-7125.

- **New appointments:**

Rafael Barahona, director of Hispanic ministries department, Goshen (Ind.) College.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Tim Schrag will be installed as lead pastor of the Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.) on Sept. 15.

Michael Yeakey was installed as pastor of East Holbrook Mennonite Church, Cheraw, Colo., on July 14.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Darrell and Susan Caldwell began a three-year Eastern Mennonite Missions assignment in church planting and leadership development in Cambodia. They left the States with their four children in July.

Ambrosio and Jennie Encarnacion arrived in the States on July 4 after two-and-a-half years in the Dominican Republic with Eastern Mennonite Missions. Their address is 14217 Less Palm Circle, Tampa, FL 33613.

Stan and Susan Godshall returned to the United States on June 17 after one year in Tanzania with Eastern Mennonite Missions. Their address is 1891 Mt. Pleasant Rd., Mount Joy, PA 17552.

David and Jane Hooley recently began a one-year assignment with Eastern Mennonite Missions at Nazareth Hospital in Israel.

Glenn and June Kauffman and their daughter arrived in the States on June 18 for a four-month home leave from their work as evangelists and church planters in Hong Kong.

Esther and Josiah Kawira and their four children returned to Tanzania with Eastern Mennonite Missions on June 22 after a one-year home leave.

June and Paul Kropf arrived in the United States on June 28 for a three-month home leave. They serve in Albania with Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Miriam Oberholtzer arrived in the States on June 27 after serving four years at Shirati Hospital, Tanzania. Her address is 502 Oberholtzer Rd., Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

Doug and Elaine Shenk and their two children returned to the States on June 27 after three years in Djibouti. Their address is 4079 East Harrisburg Pike, Middletown, PA 17057.

John Stoltzfus returned to the United States after two years in China with Eastern Mennonite Missions. His address is 1775 Main St., Morgantown, PA 19543.

- **Coming events:**

Heritage day at Hans Herr House, Willow Street, Pa., Aug. 3. Workshops on 18th-century Mennonite worship, singing, and Pennsylvania German farm buildings will be offered. More information available from 717 464-4438.

Ohio Mennonite relief sale and auction, Central Christian High School, Kidron, Ohio, Aug. 3. Features quilts, wood products, apple butter making, and a five-kilometer run. More information from Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale, Box 62, Kidron, OH 44646.

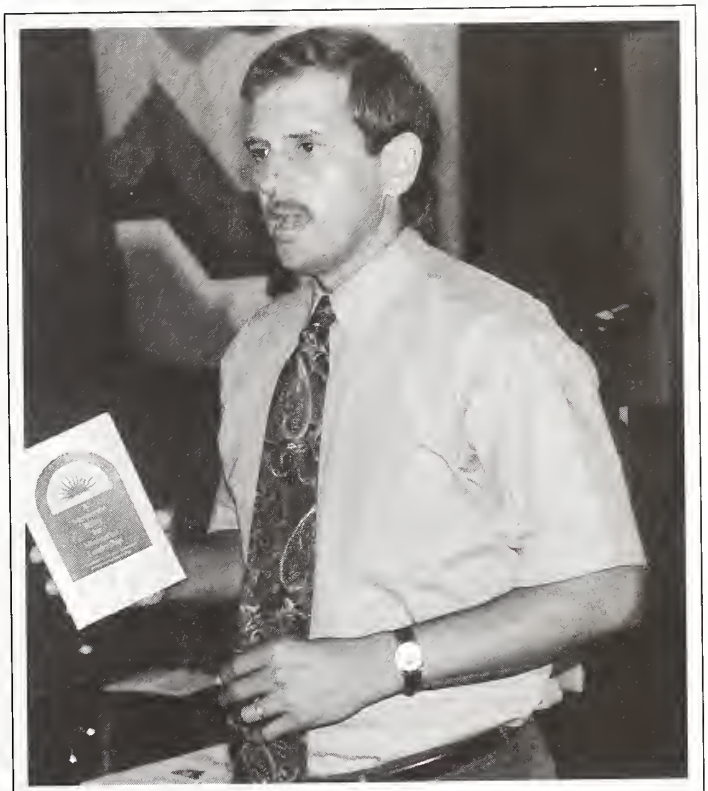
50th anniversary celebration, Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa., Oct. 6. The daylong event begins at 9:30 am.

- **New resources:**

Benin: Giving God the Glory is a new mission packet from Mennonite Board of Missions for congregations, Sunday school groups, and families. Includes plans for a mission meal, children's offering project, mini-missions festival, and a four-Sunday missions emphasis. Also features stories from MBM workers, photographs, recipes, a cassette of Beninese music, and African cloth. Available from Karen Hallis Ritchie at MBM at 219 294-7523.

- **Job openings:**

Coordinator, Iowa Peace Network, Des Moines, Iowa. Responsibilities include publishing a newsletter, programming, networking, administration, and fundraising for peace and justice organization affiliated with historic peace and United Methodist churches. Application deadline is Sept. 30. Direct inquiries to Search Committee, Iowa Peace Network, 4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312-2496.



Polity book released. *Elkhart, Ind. (MBCM)*—Everett Thomas, editor of a new 148-page polity book, introduces the document during a workshop at Allegheny Mennonite Conference July 11-14. *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership* describes three leadership offices in congregational life: the overseer or bishop, the pastor, and primary lay leaders. Adopted by both the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church general boards in 1995, the book includes chapters on theology, Mennonite history, the new polity, qualifications for ministry, and ethics for leaders.

The polity document can be purchased through the Mennonite Publishing House at 800 245-7894.

Director of student activities, Goshen (Ind.) College. Qualifications include bachelor's degree in physical education, athletic administration, recreation, or similar field. Responsibilities include administration of facilities and campus services and supervision of student activities. Send letter of application and résumé to Norm Kauffmann, dean of students, Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

• **Change of address:** *Michael Yeakey and Kathy Nofziger,* PO Box 324, Cheraw, CO 81030.

NEW MEMBERS

Berkey Avenue, Goshen, Ind.: Lisa Bergey, Laura Sommers, Rachel Weaver, and Jacob Yoder.
Breslau, Ont.: Emilee Bender, Kristen Gingrich, Lucas Snider, Fred Lehman, Reynold and Joanne Kipfer, and Mike and Carolyn Strathdee.
Doylestown, Pa.: Daniel Cooper, Andrew McElhaney, Emily Moyer, Christy Ortiz, and Keith Wyble.
Hopedale, Ill.: Phil and Kim Bachman.
Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: Karen Smucker Shelly.
Millersville, Pa.: Robert Neuenschwander and Lois Neuenschwander.
Salem, Shickley, Neb.: Brian Kempf, Benjamin Schlegel, Bradley Schlegel, Jeffrey Yoder, Kelli Kennel, Katie Swartzendruber, Sarah Swartzendruber, and Jill Swartzendruber.

BIRTHS

Ewing, Rhonda and Eugene, Perkasie, Pa., Hannah Elise (third child), June 26.
Henderson, Brenda Boettger and Mike, Kitchener, Ont., Jessica Kathleen (second child), July 1.
Horst, Brenda Lantzy and Steven, Norristown, Pa., Harrison Gregory (first child), June 5.
Miller, Carol Brenneman and Phil, Prescott Valley, Ariz., Benjamin Keith (second child), July 10.
Myers, Sandra Hunsberger and Jeff, Schwenksville, Pa., Rebecca Lynn (first child), July 4.
York, Judy Rupp and Leo, Montpelier, Ohio, Kregg Alan (fourth child), July 2.

MARRIAGES

Alderfer-Landis: Daniel Alderfer, Harleysville, Pa. (Covenant Community), and Alicia Landis, Harleysville, Pa. (Indian Valley), June 20, by Richard Woodcock and Earl Anders.
Anders-Grasse: Steven Anders, Souderton, Pa. (Covenant Community), and Melanie Grasse, Telford, Pa. (Indian Valley), June 8, by Richard Woodcock and Earl Anders (father of the groom).
Buckwalter-Klassen: Lori Buckwalter, Lititz, Pa. (Akron), and Brigham Klassen, Mountain Lake, Minn. (Bethel), July 6, by Beryl Jantzi.
Dibble-Ebbs: Robert Dibble, Gainesville, Fla. (Bethany), and Linda Ebbs, Albany, Ore. (Bethany), July 6, by John Willems.
Friesen-Wengerd: Jonathan Friesen, Fresno, Calif. (Mennonite Brethren), and Kristin Wengerd, Goshen, Ind., June 29, by J. Stanley Friesen, father of the groom.
Gushwa-Williams: Maggie Gushwa, Goshen, Ind. (Southside Fellowship), and Adam Williams, Goshen, Ind. (Southside Fellowship), July 4, by Willard E. Roth.
Hanley-Swartzentruber: Maureen Hanley, West Roxbury, Mass., and Ron Swartzentruber, Harleysville, Pa. (Methacton), June 1, by Richard Knight.
Hertzler-Yoder: Keith Hertzler, Powhatan, Va. (Powhatan), and Vivian Yoder, Plain City, Ohio (United Bethel), April 20, by Ed Heatwole.
Johnston-Moriichi: Ruth M. Johnston, Iowa City, Iowa (First), and Shuji Moriichi, Sapporo, Japan (Shalom), June 1, by Diane Zaerr and Ken Johnson Shenk.
Kirk-Willems: Joan Kirk, Goshen, Ind. (College), and Leroy Willems, Goshen, Ind. (Kern Road), July 6, by David and Janice Yordy Sutter.
Kristek-Wedel: James Kristek, Wichita, Kan., and Gayle Rudiger Wedel, Newton, Kan. (Shalom), April 20, by Pearl Hoover.
Liechty-Wilansky: Dan Liechty, Havertown, Pa. (Germantown), and Naomi Wilansky, Havertown, Pa. (Mishkon Shalom Synagogue), June 16, by Brian Walt.
Saal-Sommer: Troy Saal, Tremont, Ill. (Baptist), and Laura Sommer, Tremont, Ill. (First), June 22, by Duane Brubaker.
Schweer-Shenk: Matthew Schweer, DeKalb, Mo., and Shantell Shenk, Hesston, Kan. (Hesston Inter-Mennonite), July 6, by Kent Fuqua.
Stoesz-Warren: Conrad Stoesz, Winnipeg, Man. (Altona Bergthaler), and Michelle Warren, Winnipeg, Man. (Erb Street), July 6, by Doug Snyder.
Stutzman-Deering: David Stutzman, Hesston, Kan. (Garden), and Sharon Deering, Hesston, Kan. (Hesston Inter-Mennonite), June 29, by Duane A. Yoder.

A prayer for Lucre. *Lucre, Peru (EMM)*—Leon Schnupp, center, leads a prayer meeting at Santisima Cruz on Mama Qoya mountain above the village of Lucre, Peru. He is joined by Alejo Huaman, a lay leader in the Lucre Mennonite Church (left), and Richard Showalter, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Schnupp, along with Mennonite missionaries and Quechua Christians, prayed in Quechua, Spanish, and English for the Quechua people. Mennonite churches have begun in Lucre, Angostura, Huacarpay, and Cusco, in the last eight years. "I believe God would have us pray to break the spiritual powers represented here, which have held the people of these mountains in bondage," said Schnupp at the mountain shrine.—*Jewel Showalter*

DEATHS

Fulmer, Harrison, 84, Oregon, Pa. Born: Philadelphia, Pa., to William and Lillian Fulmer. Died: July 1, 1996, Lititz, Pa. Survivors—wife: Irene Burkhart Fulmer, children: Harold, Walter, Richard, Elsie Weaver, Mary Hoefler, Judy Madewell; sister: Dorothy Long; 17 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: July 5, Landis Valley Mennonite Church, by Thomas Horst and Lester Hoover.
Gingerich, Kenneth L., 36, Iowa City, Iowa. Born: April 10, 1960, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alvin and Lydia Ropp Gingerich. Died: June 30, 1996, Iowa City, Iowa, of a brain tumor. Survivors—wife: Cathy Wiebe; parents: Alvin and Lydia Gingerich; children: Nathan, Matthew, and Hannah; brothers and sisters: Daniel, James, Donald, Dwight, Ella Mae, Celeste Miller, Jewel Longenecker. Funeral: July 3, First Mennonite Church, by Firman Gingerich and Diane Zaerr. Burial: East Union Cemetery.
Groff, Myrtle Frances, 84, Glendale, Ariz. Born: May 9, 1912, Sterling, Ill., to Jonas and Hattie Ebersole Groff. Died: July 7, 1996, Glendale, Ariz. Survivors—sisters and brothers: Alice Jennings, Ella Journey, Lawrence, Robert. Congregational membership: Sunnyslope Mennonite Church. Fu-

Wealth of handicrafts. *Kathmandu, Nepal (MCC)*—Women at the Association for Craft Producers sand trays. The organization provides design, marketing, and other services to more than 800 Nepalese craftspeople, mostly rural women. Selfhelp Crafts of the World purchases jackets, vests, tablecloths, pottery, and other items to sell in North America.

Until the 1950s, Nepal's leaders isolated their mountain kingdom from the outside world. Today impoverished Nepal, hindered by high illiteracy rates and low technological development, continues to play catch-up. Nepal's isolation, however, helped conserve a wealth of traditional skills, including weaving, basketmaking, and block printing.—*Pearl Sensenig*

neral: July 10, Glencroft Community Church, by Dennis Stauffer and Ray Keim. Burial: Ontario, Calif.

Hathaway, Ruby U. Greaser, 79, Garden City, Mo. Born: May 15, 1917, to Charles F. and Pearl Celesta Hershberger Greaser. Died: June 2, 1996, Monroe City, Mo. Survivors—husband: Oliver Leroy Hathaway; children: Howard M., James L., Melvin R., Janice I. Christ, Dorothy Livengood; brothers: Lawrence H., Earl; 8 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. Predeceased by Lawrence L. (son). Funeral and burial: June 5, Pea Ridge Mennonite Church, by Darrel Zook and Carl Helmuth.

Heishman, Raymond Robert, 85, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Oct. 7, 1910, Wardensville, W.Va., to William Thomas and Rebecca Landacre Heishman. Died: July 7, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va., of cancer. Survivors—daughters: Lois Whitecotton, Sadie Miller, Carolyn Wenger; sister and brother: Alma Gregory, Edgar; 5 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Della Gladys Funkhouser Heishman (wife). Congregational membership: Ridgeway Mennonite Church. Funeral: July 10, Lindsey Funeral Home, by John D. Kiblinger and Lee Ebersole. Burial: Wardensville Cemetery.

Hofkamp, Michael Jay, 34, North Newton, Kan. Born: Aug. 19, 1961, Leota, Minn., to John and Marlene Van Surksum Hofkamp. Died: May 30, 1996, North Newton, Kan., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Rebecca Tuinstra; parents: John and Marlene Hofkamp; children: Martin, Sarah; brother and sisters: Wes, Val Rathje, and Jody. Congregational membership: First Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 31, Shalom Mennonite Church, by Wes Bergen and Pearl Hoover. Burial: Leota Community Cemetery.

Lauver, David C., 71, Mechanicsburg, Pa. Born: Sept. 15, 1924, Shiremanstown, Pa., to Jacob and Amanda Lauver. Died: July 1, 1996, Camp Hill, Pa. Survivors—sister and brothers: Esther A., Earl, Marlin H., and John R. Funeral and burial: July 5, Slate Hill Mennonite Church, by Paul W. Nisly.

Miller, Catherine E., 83, Shipshewana, Ind. Born: June 16, 1913, LaGrange, Colo., to John F. and Clara Miller Hostetler. Died: June 29, 1996, Payson, Ariz. Survivors—children: Darlene Geyer, Diana Litwiller, and Dale D.; sister and brother: Delis Hooley and Wilbur; 10 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Wilbur N. Miller (husband). Funeral: July 3, Emma Mennonite Church, by John C. Murray. Burial: Miller Cemetery.

Pflederer, Randall David, 20, Goshen, Ind. Born: March 27, 1976, Bellefontaine, Ohio, to Robert and Lorraine Moyer Pflederer. Died: June 15, 1996, San Antonio, Tex., in an automobile accident. Survivors—parents: Robert and Lorraine Pflederer; brother: Matthew. Funeral: June 20, Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, by Richard Litwiller. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

Roupp, Bertha P., 91, Elkhart, Ind. Born: May 14, 1905, Elkhart, Ind., to Charlie and Mary Kulp Shantz. Died: July 3, 1996, Elkhart, Ind. Survivors—children: Dorothy Whiteman, Thelma Rivera, Albert. Predeceased by: Walter R. Roupp (husband) and a son. Funeral and burial: July 6, 1996, Prairie Street Mennonite Church, by Russell Krabill.

Seitz, Jean Hostetler, 54, Port Republic, Va. Born: June 1, 1942, Hartville, Ohio, to Leon and Edna Hostetler. Died: July 8, 1996, Port Republic, Va., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Delbert L. Seitz; children: Randall, Lucinda Mathews, Janelle Seitz; brothers: Dale, Lynn; one grandchild. Funeral: July 10, 1996, Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, by Wayne North and Steve Yoder. Burial: Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Steiner, Marvin R., 80, Kidron, Ohio. Born: Nov. 13, 1915, Kidron, Ohio, to John R. and Eliya Neuenschwander Steiner. Died: July 7, 1996, Dalton, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Mary Eberly Steiner; children: Glenn, Roy, Richard, Elam, Stephen, Mark, Dallas; sister and brothers: Lila, Leo, Raymond, Tilman; 27 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Chestnut Ridge Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: July 10, 1996, Kidron Mennonite Church, by Elno Steiner and Raul Tadeo.

Weaver, Hazel Ellen Lehman, 97, Glendale, Ariz. Born: July 30, 1898, Wakarusa, Ind., to Simeon and Salome Lehman. Died: May 19, 1996, Glendale, Ariz. Survivors—children: Kenneth, Stanley, Herbert, Margaret Woods; sister and brother: Edna Yoder, Wilbur Lehman; 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Floyd W. Weaver (husband), Herman (son). Funeral: May 22, 1996, Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, by Dennis Stauffer. Burial: Resthaven Park Cemetery.

Newspaper

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When we win the lottery

Only once have I played the lottery. It was on a dare from a youth group for which I was an adult sponsor—a group with a Christmas gift exchange tradition. One year the fellow with my name gave me: (1) a ride on the mall kiddie train; (2) a state lottery ticket. Thirty-five MYF-ers waited to see what I would do.

I took the train ride—to laughter and applause. And I found myself glued to the TV the night of the lottery drawing.

So were my friends and several from my congregation. By then word had spread I had a lottery ticket (this was before the drawings were daily). The suggestions I got for what to do with my winnings were myriad. Chief among them was paying off my congregation's mortgage. Then I could give large sums to missions. My church and I might even start a new work of our own. (No one suggested I keep much of the money for myself!)

I needn't have worried about that decision. My numbers didn't hit. So I, along with my congregation, had to continue paying off the mortgage and funding missions the conventional way: little by little, Sunday by Sunday.

Which seems to be running into difficulty these days. Wherever I go, in almost every church-related business session I attend, the bottom line is money. Or the lack thereof. Churchwide boards, area conferences, local congregations—for all the gap between what we think we ought to do and the money we have to do it with seems to be widening.

Of course, there are many ways to interpret what's happening among us financially. Some say we're simply redirecting funds from one ministry to another. Others see people voting with their dollars about the church's work.

But the way we fund our work makes me wonder. The church makes a decision to do something: pay a pastor a decent wage, start a halfway house, send a missionary to a group of unreached peoples. For a time, we are all enthusiastic, and the project succeeds. Then our attention shifts elsewhere, and soon we have to hire fundraisers and conduct special campaigns to keep going what we agreed to do in the first place.

We have, in other words, developed a lottery mentality in relation to the church's work. Sure, we say we are against lotteries. Yet more and more, church agencies and programs have to be gamblers when they set budgets. They do it with lines like "faith revenue."

Whatever happened to commitment? Where is our follow-through, even for decisions made by previous generations? Do we allow these decisions to languish and die for lack of support? Must church programs forever look for that miracle, that lottery win, to keep going?

Times change—and so must the church's work. But that change should be the result of discussion and prayer, not because we've reneged on our promises.

"I have a burden about Mennonites needing spiritual renewal," a friend wrote to me recently. "We've become so wealthy, so acculturated, so individualistic."

Spiritual renewal tied to money? That's not the way we think of revival coming. Yet, given all I've been hearing recently, I tend to think my friend is right. If the Spirit is to renew the Mennonite church of North America, that renewal will touch our wealth.

For me it's sobering to realize Jesus has as much or more to say about money than about any other topic. Many of his words are difficult to hear. Mark Thiessen Nation sums them up this way (see page 6): "Give generously and sacrificially; the rich cannot enter heaven; trust in God for material well-being; do not be greedy; the love of money is the root of all evil; and love your neighbor as yourself."

I suspect our future is not in more talk about giving and stewardship—as necessary as talk is. We've heard a lot about these in the past few years. Yet the red ink in many of our financial reports is vivid as ever.

What each of us may need to do is come honestly before God and ask: What is my attitude toward the money I have? What values do I exhibit in the way I support—or don't support—the work of the church? What does it mean for me to live as a North American Mennonite who wants to use my wealth in ways that are not acculturated or individualistic?

God has great things that could be done through our church. But they will not take place as we sit, waiting for a miracle. They will happen only if we recommit ourselves to support the church—sacrificially and generously—with our money. That may even bring the revival for which we long and pray.—*jlp*

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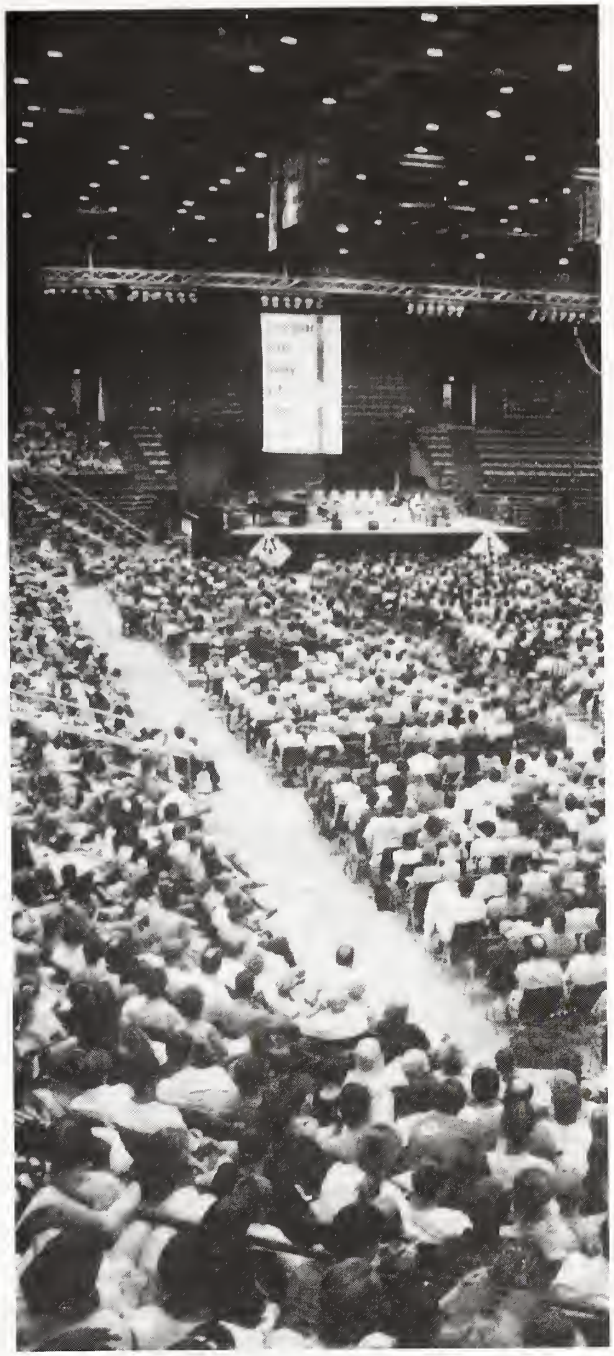
August 6, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



Mennonites meeting together at Wichita '95: "Here I see people working for the kingdom, considering justice, mercy, and personal spirituality. Here I see people laying down their desires in order to serve others."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Martin Shupack:
Some principles for an Anabaptist witness to governing authorities . . . 5

Are Mennonites ready for a new definition of leadership? 9

Swords into plowshares:
Churches convert military base into homeless residences 11

How my God met me (13):

Here, among Mennonites, I have seen God

Mennonites are far from being a problemless group, but we are on the right track, mostly, facing hard times and prosperity with creativity and courage.

by Steve Kriss

It's been more than a dozen years since I first set foot in a Mennonite church. At the age of 11, I was forced into the experience by my parents. I can finally admit that I had little choice in the matter. So I am not really a Mennonite by choice—but one because of what I have seen.

My parents had decided that, after years of not attending a church, we should visit a Mennonite congregation. I, along with them, knew little about Mennonites. We knew that there were a lot of them in Lancaster, and after the disastrous Johnstown flood in 1977, they came to help clean up. We knew that my dad's friend, Bob Miller, had attended a Mennonite church all his life. We had never seen Bob wear black clothes and knew that he drove cars with visible chrome, yet we were still suspicious. Bob told us that we should come some Sunday for church.

I don't clearly remember the Sunday we attended for the first time. My parents say that they had decided they wouldn't go into the church building if all of the cars in the parking lot were black. They weren't. We have attended

I am glad to be Mennonite because of the people. My mom always urged me to avoid peer pressure, but in this case I'm glad to be part of a courageous, creative, and faithful people.

Carpenter Park Mennonite Church in Davidsville, Pa., ever since.

Becoming a Mennonite changed my life. My parents had both grown up in mainline churches, though we lived in a predominantly Catholic community. I was rather suspicious of this church at first, but I proudly assumed my new title as a Mennonite. I proclaimed myself a Mennonite to friends at the public school I attended, where there was likely no other Mennonite in the entire system. That year in sixth grade I was glad to dispel the myths—that all Mennonites wore black clothing, that they all drove buggies, that all of the women wore bonnets.

I rapidly assimilated into a Mennonite culture by attending youth group meetings, transferring to a Mennonite-affiliated Christian school, and moving with my parents from our small town to a more suburban area 10 minutes away with a greater concentration of Mennonite folks.

I became surrounded by a world that even my parents didn't totally understand. I learned of all the Yoders in the area and began to discern the family connections that still baffle me today. After just over a year of attending Carpenter Park, I met Jesus personally for the first time and was baptized into a faith that I am learning to embrace and appreciate more.

Mennonites are far from being a problemless group, but we are on the right track, mostly. We are a more unique people than I first thought, yet at the same time we share a lot with the others around us. We are a changing group of people that has faced hard times and prosperity with creativity and courage.

I am glad to be Mennonite because we are a community. While I attended college at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., my parents joked that I should never do anything that I didn't want them to know about because they could find out before I had finished what I was doing. And they were right. Though I was three hours away from my western Pennsylvania home, there were enough connections with Harrisonburg to warrant the statement. Some people consider this gossiping or busybodiness, but I think it represents community. I knew that if there was a problem, too, that people in Johnstown could know within minutes—literally.

We trust each other as a community. While traveling with friends who were in Voluntary Service with Mennonite Board of Missions this spring, I stayed in the home of a Mennonite woman in Colorado Springs. She doesn't even know that I stayed there. I don't even know her name because she was away while we were there. She had only met my volunteer friends once but trusted them enough to send the key in the mail and to tell us to enjoy her home for an evening. I am still stunned by her hospitality.

As a community, we bear each other's burdens. I will not soon forget the tears of the Goshen College Chamber Choir as they dedicated two songs to the family of Alicia Showalter Reynolds, who had been missing for only a few days at the time. We care about each other though we don't even know each other. Few members of the choir probably actually knew Alicia. Yet they felt the pain of Alicia's sister, Barbara, who was to be touring with them.

I am glad to be Mennonite because we are a diverse church. For decades, Mennonites were stereotyped as a rural people with similar backgrounds. Sure, we had our diversity—Russian Mennonites, Dutch Mennonites, and Swiss-German Mennonites. We even talked about how different the groups were and how hard it was to get along and understand each other's cultural differences.

Now even Kriss is a Mennonite name. For me, it was a rite of passage to have a New York pastor tell me that she knew how to spell my last name because it was a Mennonite name. My family is the only one I know of with the last name of Kriss in the Mennonite Church. Kriss is actually an Americanized Slovak name, but the day has finally arrived that we can include people of varying ethnicities in the inner circles of the church. Now, Mennonite names include people with last names like Czuplak, Dich, Santiago, and Isaacs.

I am glad to hear the statistics on what it means to be Mennonite. There are more of us in places like India, Indonesia, and Zaire than there are in the United States, Europe, and Canada. In the Mennonite Church, we are growing at a rate above 10 percent. We are planting new churches in diverse places—one every 18 days in the past ten years. We are working together with Mennonites from other countries to plant churches among their people groups here—like the Honduran group, Amor Viviente, that has helped start churches in urban areas. Almost half of new Mennonites are people of color. We are growing and changing to become a multicultural people of God.

I recently heard someone complain that you can never predict the worship style of Mennonite congregations. I count it a blessing that we can be part of one body and worship with liturgy, four-part harmony, or Pentecostal style. God can be worshiped in many ways, and we as Mennonites represent those well. Whether we sing choruses, hymns, or are accompanied by a brass band, we can share in the love of God, realizing that God has created us differently. We can hear sermons peppered with audience response and with a wide range of emotions, or sermons preached in a more laid-back reflective style. Some of us worship in large beautiful buildings while others prefer to rent rooms and use folding chairs. We are a diverse lot of people, something that represents the wideness in the kingdom of God.

Author Steve Kriss: "I am really not a Mennonite by choice but because of what I have seen."

I am glad I am Mennonite because we value service and peacemaking. At a recent meeting, I met a woman working for a large Christian agency with projects around the world. She told me that her agency began to explore ways of peacemaking and reconciliation only to discover the vast network of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and its decades of history. She said her co-workers were overwhelmed by what they could learn from MCC. We value things that are at times unheard-of in the rest of the world. We do some crazy things that are difficult to explain. I have a friend who works at a wealthy, suburban congregation of another denomination through a Mennonite voluntary service program. She is not even paid half of what other staff members earn at the church. When people discovered that she was living on $50 each month and the rest of her salary was used to supplement the income of others in her program, they were incredulous. They have continued to shower her with generosity to help take care of her throughout her term.

We send people to bring hope in places where hope is almost unavailable. MCC workers hold a presence of peace in Africa to avoid the continual slaughter of people. Christian Peacemaker Teams monitor volatile situations with acts of nonviolent protest, facing arrest or imprisonment, in places like Haiti and the West

(continued on page 4)

Bank. Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) sponsors teams of high school youth as service workers to help instill service in another generation, and to convince others that this generation is looking for more than opportunities to pierce various body parts.

I am glad to be Mennonite because of the people. My mom always urged me to avoid peer pressure—to never do something just because other people were doing it. But in this case, I am glad to be Mennonite because of some of the courageous, creative, and faithful people among us.

Ray and Anna Pacheco ardently put their congregation, First Mennonite of Brooklyn, foremost in their life. They live and breathe through the life of the church. The congregation is their family. They have dedicated their lives to serving God through the Mennonites of New York City.

Tim Swartzentruber, a good college friend, took off for a one-year term with MBM after graduating. From what he writes, he will never see the world the same way. Now he works as an admissions counselor at Eastern Mennonite University. Though he grew up in a traditional Midwestern family, Tim embraced the struggles of urban America and of West Africa and is willing to speak about it almost anytime.

There are people like Lester and Lillian Jacobs. Lester died a few years ago after a bout with cancer. I visited them frequently as part of an internship at my home church during his illness. They lived a simple life in an A-frame tucked back a dirt lane in a steep-backed river valley. Lester met Jesus late in life and was baptized in the river behind their home. I have never felt so at home at church as the Sunday about a year ago when Lillian gave me a hug and said, "It's just good to see you again."

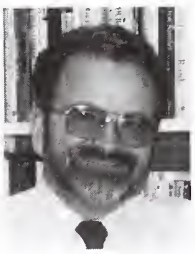
I remain a Mennonite because in all that I have seen, in my twenty-four years, it is with these people that I see a faith shared and lived out. I see people working for the kingdom, considering justice, mercy, and personal spirituality. I see communities that take care of each other. I see people laying down their own desires for life to serve others. I see growth and change. It is here, among Mennonites, that I have seen God.

Steve Kriss is editor of Christian Living *magazine, Scottdale, Pa. This month he also becomes associate pastor part-time at his home congregation, Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa.*

The day has finally arrived that we can include people of varying ethnicities in the inner circles of the church. Now even Kriss has become a Mennonite name!

***"Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky."*—Psalm 85:10-11, NRSV**

Gospel Herald



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Avoiding the mudholes:

Some principles for an Anabaptist witness to governing authorities

by Martin Shupack

I remember an editorial page cartoon during the 1980s that depicted one filth-splattered preacher baptizing another in a mudhole labeled "politics." Going back a little further, I recall an unforgettable image of Martin Luther King Jr. locked arm-in-arm with other religious leaders during the 1963 March on Washington. Coretta Scott King later described this event by saying, "For a few hours it seemed like the kingdom of God was present on earth."

Anabaptist Christians can identify with the views expressed in both these pictures. Some Mennonites believe that holiness requires separation from the political arena. But for others, Jesus' followers serve as salt and light by bringing something of Christ's redeeming presence to all of human society—to social and cultural practices, civil institutions, business enterprises, and, yes, even to government.

Bearing witness to governing authorities should not be thought of as the most important mission of the church. Glorifying God through the miracle of transformed lives and relationships and making communities of disciples from among all nations have stronger claims to that distinction. But this testimony is *one* mission of the church, and how it is carried out can honor or dishonor the name of Jesus. The following guiding principles can perhaps help us engage in a Christian witness to governing authorities that avoids the "mudholes" and is faithful to Jesus, Scripture, and our Anabaptist heritage.

Christian witness to governing authorities is a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. "The time is fulfilled," cries Jesus, "the kingdom of God has come near!" God's reign has broken into history in Jesus Christ and will come in fullness to all creation at his return. Our witness to Christ's lordship over all powers and authorities should invite government officials to make choices that respond to the good news of God's kingdom by assisting society toward doing God's will on earth.

The apostle Paul was chosen to bring Christ's name "before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel" (Acts 9:15). He spoke forthrightly to Felix about "justice, self-control, and the coming judgment" (Acts 24:25). If our witness to governing authorities is an expression of the gospel, we too ought to speak plainly about the faith basis and moral grounds for the policies we support, in addition to offering reasoned arguments for their practical benefit to society. This can be done without moralizing or self-righteousness. It requires hearing and treating respectfully the concerns of those who do not share our views. It means humbly recognizing that many temporal issues are complex and laden with ambiguity.

Government officials are human beings who deserve our pastoral care and concern. They will make better policy decisions as their own fears are assuaged and hopes are kindled. While we may not expect our elected officials or fellow citizens to share our faith, each may take something from our witness that will influence his or her decisions toward the good.

Anabaptist Christians understand that authentic witness must arise from communities of believers that model the kingdom practices that we wish to commend to society at large. For example, a prophetic call for economic justice will have integrity and power only if it is rooted in congregations that are themselves models of non-acquisitive lifestyles, the sharing of material resources, and just relationships among members coming from different socio-economic classes.

Christian witness to governing authorities is presence, not power. Jesus renounced the world's instruments of power as the means of bringing his kingdom. The early Christians' opportunities to speak to rulers came through persecution. The means by which we witness to governing authorities are as important as the content of our message.

Corporations, trade associations, and other monied interests use their vast financial resources to influence policy-makers. They contribute to reelection campaigns, employ well-connected lobbyists, and mobilize mass constituent activities. A Christian witness rejects the manipulation of wealth and power in favor of dialogue, truth-telling, and an appeal to conscience.

"Telling our stories" from personal experiences and relationships—and assisting our neighbors to tell their stories—can help policy makers connect their choices to the lives of real people who suffer and hope. Placing policy decisions in the context of compassionate moral concern can assist elected officials to make decisions that risk unpopularity or the anger of powerful lobbies.

At the grassroots level, where Anabaptist believers have been more comfortable serving, Christian involvement in assisting communities to address injustices nonviolently can serve God's goals. Recent examples include the civil

Witness to government is not the most important mission of the church. But it is one mission—and how it is carried out can honor or dishonor Jesus Christ.

rights movement in the United States, the nonviolent "people power revolution" that removed the corrupt dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, and the peaceful repudiation of communism in Eastern Europe. But we must engage in this kind of action with a clear commitment to nonviolence, love for adversaries, and humble reliance of God's Spirit—not merely human resources—to bring fruit from our efforts.

Christian witness to governing authorities should be advocacy, not lobbying. Advocacy is important to the Christian mission because it is at the core of the ministry of Jesus (1 John 2:1). Most lobbying involves promoting one's own self-centered, special interests. Advocacy is speaking out for the neighbor in need. "Speak out for those who cannot speak," commands Scripture, "for the rights of all the destitute . . . defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Prov. 31:8-9). In a democracy, every citizen is free to seek laws and policies that benefit them and are congruent with the common good. But Christians have a higher calling. In Christ we are set free from the need to defend the narrow self-interest of our religious community, nation, socioeconomic class, or ethnic group. The purpose of Christian advocacy is to express God's love.

Through personal friendships, sister churches, and ties with missionaries and service workers, followers of Jesus from different races, economic classes, and nations can learn together about the impact of political and economic policies on those struggling to overcome marginalization, poverty, and violence. These relationships can help us make knowledgeable choices about policies that promote dignity, justice, and peace for the most vulnerable people.

Christian witness should foster policies that empower the poor and disenfranchised. "I have seen the misery of my people," says the Lord to Moses, "and how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh" (Exod. 3:7-10). Believers are called to urge governing authorities to defend the dignity and promote the well-being of people who are struggling against poverty and discrimination. Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos advocated for government action on behalf of the poor and oppressed in the strongest terms. Daniel tells the pagan ruler Nebuchadnezzar to "atone for your sins by doing righteousness and for your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor" (Dan. 4:27). Jesus often speaks about compassion and justice for the poor and outcast, announcing the new order of God's reign in which the poor and weak are empowered and the rich and powerful are dispossessed (e.g., Luke 6:20-26).

Although the early Anabaptists were a persecuted minority rarely in position to influence government policy, the creation of loving and equitable social and economic structures was integral to their vision of a just community. In our own time, 1,500 children throughout the world die needlessly every *hour* from poverty-related treatable or preventable illnesses. Ending this terrible suffering and scandalous loss should be at the heart of Christian policy advocacy. According to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* adopted at Wichita '95, Jesus' followers are called to "witness by being ambassadors for Christ, calling the nations (and all persons and institutions) to move toward justice, peace and compassion for all people."

Christian witness should foster peace. Jeremiah wrote the Jewish community in Babylon, counseling them to participate in the life of their city of exile and actively seek its peace and well-being (Jer. 29:4-7). The New Testament tells us that governing authorities serve God when they preserve a just order in society (Rom. 13:1-4), and we are instructed to pray for them that we might live in peace and tranquillity (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Most significantly, God has made peace with us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and will reconcile in Christ all things in heaven and on earth (Eph. 1:9-10).

Christians witness to Christ's reconciling work by proclaiming the gospel of peace, loving enemies, and trusting in God for our security rather than in the weapons of war. According to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, "[We] witness to all people that violence is not the will of God. We witness against all forms of violence, including war among nations, hostility among races and classes, abuse of children and women, violence between men and women, abortion, and capital punishment."

Followers of Jesus can call for government policies that reduce society's reliance on violence and maximize dialogue and mutual understanding among nations—promoting positions that neither divinize our own country's

policies nor demonize the policies of its adversaries.

Christian witness should foster respect for life. Respect for life is a pervasive value in Scripture. As creator, life-giver, and redeemer, God is revealed as God of life. Bearing the divine image, human beings are called to respect and uphold life by being responsible caretakers of creation, defending the sanctity of human life, and serving as instruments of the redemption of life through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Personal responsibility to respect and uphold life in these ways is paramount, but government is a tool that people in organized society can use to help fulfill this vocation.

Respecting life means being good stewards. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it," proclaims the psalmist (Ps. 24:1); and we are God's stewards charged with cultivating and protecting this treasure. After the Flood, God made a covenant of preservation not only with Noah and humankind but with every living creature. Redemption in Christ—already present and coming in fullness—brings renewal to all creation (Rom. 8:19-22). According to a Mennonite Central Committee statement, *Stewards in God's Creation*, it is fitting for Mennonites to "support and cooperate with private and public organizations and actions which advance environmental improvement [and] conversely, oppose legislation and actions which endanger the physical environment."

Respecting life means upholding the sanctity of human life. The Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Pauh, gave witness to their reverence for God by their acts of noncooperation with the Egyptian authorities, refusing to take the lives of male Hebrew children. According to the *Statement on Abortion* of the Mennonite Church, abortion also "violates the biblical principles of the sanctity and value of human life." Followers of Jesus should work to transform society's values and practices so that children are welcomed and abortion is rejected.

We can advocate for unborn life by supporting legislation that provides assistance for women with unplanned pregnancies and helps single mothers and their children have lives of sufficiency and dignity. I believe we should also seek to discern what kinds of legislative protections for unborn life may be appropriate at this time. However, we should keep in mind that laws regulating behavior depend for their effectiveness—and their ability to minimize destructive unintended consequences—on the existence of a consensus among most members of society about what is right and acceptable. The grace-filled invitation to moral perfection will always exceed the imperfect approximation of righteousness embodied in legal regimes.

Esther advocated before King Ahasuerus for a policy decision that would prevent genocide against her people. A consistent ethic of life requires Christ's followers to uphold the sanctity of life in whatever forms it is threatened—whether by abortion, genocide, starvation and malnutrition, gun violence, alcohol, drug and tobacco abuse, capital punishment, or war.

Respecting life means upholding religious freedom. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego gave witness to God before the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar by refusing to engage in idolatrous worship intended to ensure national unity and security. The Anabaptists also offered their lives by placing God before the religious demands of the state. They were among the first religious believers to recognize that governing authorities are not competent to pass judgment in matters of religious faith.

Governments can best facilitate the spread of the gospel by safeguarding freedom of religious practice for all and by not interfering in the affairs of religious communities. Today, Anabaptist advocacy should uphold religious freedom by supporting laws that limit government's ability to restrict or interfere with the activities of religious bodies. It should oppose legislation that allows government entities to prescribe religious activities for citizens.

Christian witness must be guided and empowered by prayer. Nehemiah prayed and fasted for many days before asking King Artaxerxes for permission to rebuild Jerusalem. Esther instructed Mordecai and

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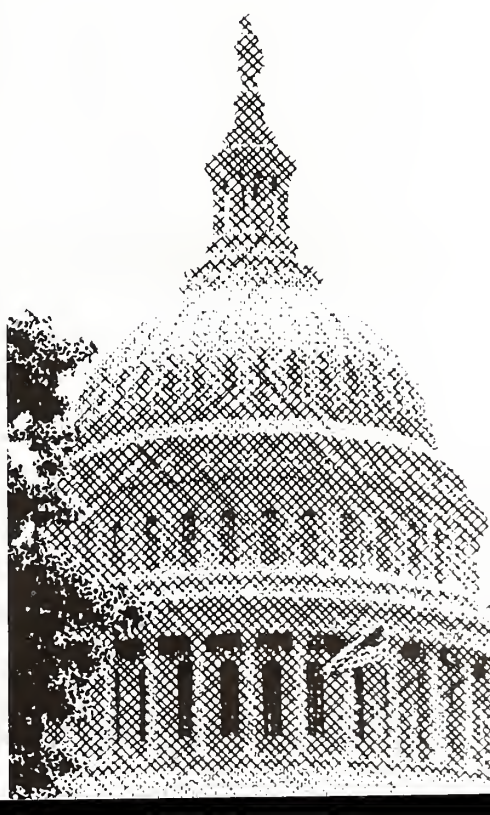

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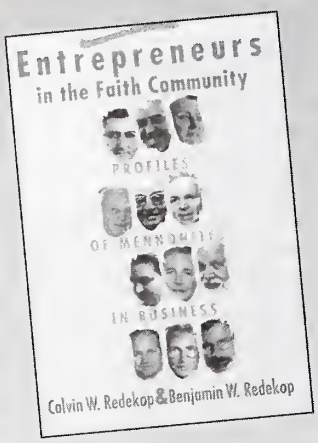

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Edited by **Calvin Redekop** and **Benjamin W. Redekop**

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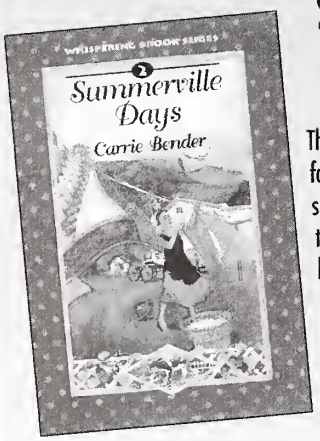

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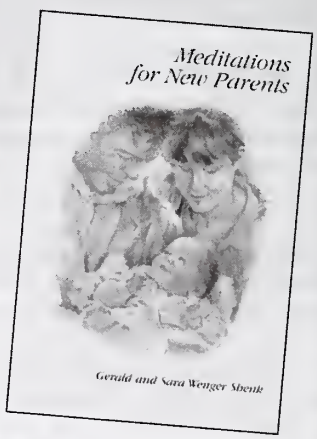

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From 'the priesthood of all believers' to 'a representative of God'

Consultation asks if Mennonites are ready for a new definition of pastoral leadership

Chicago, Ill.—Something needs to change in the way the Mennonite church calls, trains, and supports its leaders.

On that the more than 50 persons who attended a Consultation on Pastoral and Theological Leadership here July 25-27 agreed. Exactly what to do or how to do it wasn't as clear.

The two-day consultation brought together conference ministers, pastors, Mennonite seminary and college representatives, and denominational staff working in ministerial leadership offices of both the General Conference Mennonite and the Mennonite churches. Convener James Lapp, Souderton, Pa., noted this was one of the first times that persons in the church involved in calling and training pastors have met for dialogue and discussion.

"It was a refreshing surprise to find so much consensus and agreement," said Sally Schreiner, Chicago, Ill. "I came expecting more hostility between the educators and the practitioners."

One point of agreement was that many in the church are calling for a new style of leadership.

"During the 1950s and 60s, we took the concept of the 'priesthood of all believers' and translated into leadership categories that have created problems for us," said Ralph Lebold, Waterloo, Ont. "We got into an egalitarian mode that undermined the idea that persons in leadership should make clear decisions."

This brought confusion into the church "that we haven't worked through yet," said Lebold.

• • •

But there's a change. "Young people are ready for pastors with authority, persons who will occupy an 'office,' " said Marlene Kropf, Elkhart, Ind. This new generation does not quibble with the idea that leaders have to exercise authority, she said.

While many agreed, Don Rheinheimer, Monument, Colo., cautioned that there is an "adolescent quality" to this new interest. "People want leaders to run things up the flagpole. If they like it, they'll salute; if not, they'll shoot it down," Rheinheimer said.

"Are we as Mennonites prepared to move from a more functional definition of ministry to one that is more authoritative?" asked Lapp.

While most participants said yes, Duane Beck, Elkhart, Ind., noted that the definition of authority needs to be one of "casting a vision and giving life to a group" rather than wielding power.

"A pastor does have a special role in the congregation," said Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis, Ind. "When preaching, the pastor speaks for God," he said. "When I counsel, I am not a secular counselor; I am counseling for God."

• • •

In addition to working with new definitions of the office of ministry, consultation participants struggled with how to attract more persons to consider leadership roles in the church.

"The major problem is that most young people don't see the church as a major interest," said Keith Harder, Hillsboro, Kan. "They're not hostile to the church; they just think it's irrelevant."

Paul Verslius, Corvallis, Ore., saw part of the solution in the redefinition of what it means to be a pastor. "We may just find that a whole generation who didn't hear the call to pastoral ministry in the past may come back to our churches and hear that call," Verslius said.

The consultation also wrestled with how to educate leaders for the diverse racial and ethnic groups that now make up the church. "Almost half my congregations don't speak English," said Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower, Fresno, Calif., a Pacific Southwest Conference minister.

The need to provide training for bivocational or part-time pastors also received consultation attention. Ann Stuckey of the Mennonite Church's leadership office noted that close to 70 percent of MC churches have memberships below 100, the size generally needed to support a full-time pastor.

"The question is: are our educational institutions helping to develop leaders for these situations?" said Lapp.

While no one answered directly, several had ideas for new things to try, such as requiring seminary and college Bible professors to spend extended time working in local congregations.

As the consultation concluded, participants agreed more attention was needed in these areas related to leadership:

- increased partnerships between educational institutions, conferences, and congregations in calling and training leaders;
- more attention and discussion throughout the church on the meaning of "office" as related to ministry;
- increased attention to providing training for leaders in the diverse groups making up the Mennonite church.

The ideas from this consultation will go to both the GC and MC general boards, sponsors of the meeting, for more work. "Who knows what changes we will see in five years as a result," said Lapp.

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Leaders for the future must be persons in love

Chicago, Ill.—For the 21st century, the Mennonite church needs leaders who love Jesus, love the people they work with, have integrity, and develop vision.

That was the way Gerald Gerbrandt—president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg., Man.—organized four Bible studies at the consultation on pastoral and theological leadership held here July 25-27.

"I invite you to fall in love with Jesus Christ," Gerbrandt urged consultation participants, all General Conference Mennonite and Mennonite Church leaders. This is not just head knowledge, he said, but involves the same kind of emotions "you had when falling in love with your spouse."

In the same way you must "fall in love with the people you serve," Gerbrandt said—"not in the abstract of loving people but in the concrete examples of those in the church that it's hard to love.

"This love supersedes any kind of professionalism you need as a leader," Gerbrandt said.

Leaders must also be persons of integrity—people who do what they say. Gerbrandt suggested that a major way in which this integrity is measured for leaders is by what they want for their children. "Too often the same leaders who tell the church that 100 percent loyalty is to be to Jesus Christ have 'success' as the highest priority for their own children," he said.

And leaders of the church for the 21st century need to have vision: for how God is working in the world, for the role of the church, for how this church should be structured, and for how leaders function in the church.

But vision is not most important, Gerbrandt reminded his audience. "The most foundational quality for any leader in the Mennonite church is love for Jesus Christ."

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Burundi workers witness aftermath of massacre

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—"Each one of you, look into yourself. What can you do to work for peace without blaming the other side?" said Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer Susan Seitz in a June 21 address to Burundians via a radio broadcast.

Since 1993 an estimated 150,000 people have been killed in Burundi's ongoing civil war. MCC workers in Burundi have seen the aftermath of many atrocities committed by both government troops and rebel militia. Seitz' radio speech in June followed another tragedy that she and MCC volunteer Keith Miller witnessed while working at a hospital in Kibimba. The incident has increased the urgency with which MCC approaches its peacemaking efforts in Burundi.

On June 13 Miller and Seitz returned to Kibimba after transporting several people to the capital for medical treatment. They discovered that government soldiers with automatic weapons, machine guns, and bayonets had slaughtered more than 71 civilians, ranging from toddlers to an 80-year-old man.

A Burundian man in Kibimba reveals his scarred back after narrowly escaping being burned alive in an attack that killed 70 others in 1993. MCC placed workers in Kibimba in 1994 to work in the hospital, organize peace committees, and conduct peace seminars.

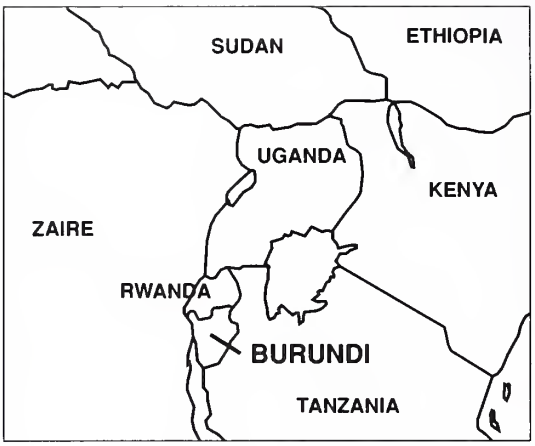
When night fell Seitz and Miller, the only expatriates in the area, investigated. They saw smoldering houses, photographed hastily dug graves, and spoke with eyewitnesses. One woman recounted how she and her children hid in a coffee thicket, watching as soldiers killed their victims. Miller and Seitz drew up a list of 41 names of the dead. Some 30 other bodies could not be identified.

When Miller and Seitz left Kibimba on June 15, townspeople were still discovering bodies. Up to 150 people died in the massacre that could have been in retaliation for earlier rebel killings of four people.

Miller and Seitz filed a report with United Nations observers based in Burundi and left the country. From Kenya, Seitz spoke on a radio program beamed into Burundi in the local language. She told what she and Miller had seen and made her plea for peace. Seitz pointed out that more than 90 percent of Burundians are Christian and that Christ asks us to love our enemies. She challenged the listeners, saying, "Love is action. What action will you take?"

MCC works behind the scenes to support various Burundian church leaders from both Hutu and Tutsi groups to explore how the church can help move toward a peaceful resolution to Burundi's violence. This difficult and delicate work depends on a fragile trust developed over the last two years of careful involvement.

Both Miller and Seitz have now completed their MCC assignments.



An estimated 150,000 people have been killed since 1993 in civil war in Burundi, Rwanda's neighbor to the south. A recent coup has resulted in increased violence and uncertainty about the future of this East African country, where ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis rages. The international community is condemning the military coup that brought army major Pierre Buyoya to power, and Mennonite Central Committee is calling for an international arms embargo and continued negotiations.

MCC stresses need for negotiations in Burundi

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Ongoing massacres such as the one Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers in Burundi witnessed in June (*see article below*) are increasing calls for international armed intervention to alleviate Burundians' suffering.

"We agree that desperate circumstances . . . call for the international community to take resolute action," reads a statement released by MCC and the Friends Committee on National Legislation on July 25. However, the two groups stress the need for increased dialogue and negotiations. After consultation with MCC workers in Africa, MCC has drawn up a list of actions the international community could take. These include:

- more support for the local peacebuilding being done by religious and community leaders in Burundi and in surrounding countries;
- continuing presence of internationals in Burundi; perhaps even sending a contingent of trained, unarmed civilians that could be deployed throughout the country;
- continuing negotiations at the diplomatic level;
- imposing an international arms embargo on Burundi;
- blocking hate radio broadcasts and instead beaming messages that promote reconciliation.

MCC workers in Geneva, Washington, New York, and Ottawa are distributing the statement to policymakers and to other humanitarian agencies.

Modern-day swords into plowshares:

Mennonites help turn air force base into homeless recovery program

Phoenix, Ariz.—It has been called the largest "swords into plowshares" project ever undertaken by Mennonites.

"It" involves one closed air force base and a dream for a comprehensive homeless program. The former Williams Air Force Base in Mesa, Ariz., will soon house 250 homeless people due to the work of members of Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz., and Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz. Plans are underway to convert some 88 houses and a chapel and office complex on the base into the House of Refuge East Recovery Program (HRE).

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The dream began five years ago when rumors circulated that the air force base was closing. When a friend suggested to the late Elmer Miller, member of the Sunnyslope congregation, that they apply for part of the base as a homeless shelter, Miller's reaction was, "No way!"

Miller was already director of a 12-person overnight homeless shelter begun by the Sunnyslope congregation eight years ago, and the idea of a new program—on an air force base—seemed almost preposterous.

But countless grant applications, negotiations, and a long five years later, a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is in process, and the first residents expect to move in sometime in September. The $2.1 million HUD grant has not yet been received because of some continuing negotiations with the agency that distributes the funds. HRE may need to look for other sources of funding such as churches, but HRE executive director Cliff Yoder says that the project will continue in some form.

The grant covers twelve staff persons and housing for 250 people. High school completion classes, job skills, and computer training, typing, and other classes will be offered, according to Yoder. The goal of the recovery program is to establish homeless people back into communities as contributing citizens, he says.

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Residents of the shelter on the air force base will receive job training for up to two years. "After that they should be on their own," says Yoder. "Only those who are willing to learn a new skill, work on their lives, and reenter society will be accepted into the program." Residents will be required to pay 30 percent of any income from jobs or government aid as well as a $50 monthly program fee.

The new program is an expansion of the original shelter at the Sunnyslope church, which continues. About 550 people have gone through House of Refuge Sunnyslope (HRS) during eight years. Some have become members of the Sunnyslope congregation and one of the former participants, Dave Atkins, is now director of HRS.

Cleanup at the base has required numerous workdays. About 70 people gathered at the base on June 8 to prepare the housing units and chapel and office complex for the program.

The House of Refuge East, a homeless recovery program scheduled to begin on the former Williams Air Force base in Mesa, Ariz., is the result of coalition efforts by many groups and individuals. Some of them are pictured above (left to right): Mim Miller, Dave Atkins, Fred Rothermel, and Cliff Yoder.

The project has crossed denominational lines. Miller, who died March 3, worked closely alongside a Catholic priest to write grant proposals and organize the project. The Church of the Nazarene has already begun holding Sunday services in the chapel, and a Catholic group has offered to provide free evening meals for all residents.

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Help has also come from unexpected places. The lawyer for the Phoenix Suns basketball team has worked for no pay on the project for the past three years. This lawyer and a representative from Senator John Kyle's office have been at every meeting with agency executives and air force administrators to insure that the grant will be received.

The saga of the development of HRE has not been without drama. Besides the current questions about funding, Arizona State University (ASU) has been "very combative toward HRS in their effort to secure part of the base," says Chris Meisinger, member of the board.

ASU wanted to purchase the whole complex for their east campus, and during one meeting a university spokesperson stormed, "We don't want your kind here. You won't get one square foot of land here!"

Meisinger says that Miller responded quietly, "I used to have a very bad attitude toward the homeless too, but that has changed, and now I want to give my life to help them."

This moment was pivotal in HRE's struggle for part of the base, says Meisinger, and since then, ASU officials have been more cooperative.

Although Elmer Miller was one of the main visionaries and his death was difficult for the congregation and others involved in HRE, the project proved larger than his dream or work. Miller's wife, Mim, remains actively involved in helping the program come to fruition. She says confidently, "We are beating arms, bombs, and swords into plowshares."

—*Jane Friesen with Valerie Weaver*

Contributions to the House of Refuge East project may be sent to: The House of Refuge East, 6001 S. Power Road, Bld. 88, Mesa, AZ 85206

The real cost of the Olympics:

Atlanta Games try to hide the city's poor and homeless, says MCC volunteer

Atlanta, Ga. (MCC)—"I watch the Olympics like everyone else," says Wendy Peters Bruner, program coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee's U.S. (MCC) service unit here. "It's exciting to see so many people from around the world putting their differences aside and coming together for this event. But most of those people don't know everything that has happened to make this possible for them," she says.

Negative effects on poor. Bruner has led the Atlanta MCC unit since 1991 and currently works at the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, an organization that advocates for homeless people and functions as a central network for service providers to the homeless.

While many people eagerly anticipated such an international event coming to Atlanta, homeless people and those who work to help them have seen the negative effects for some time.

Anita Beaty, director of the Task Force, pointed to a "mounting pattern of harassment and exclusion against street people" in the months leading up to July's Olympic Games. Efforts to help the homeless during the Games can be interpreted as an attempt to get them out of town, she said in a March 22 interview with an Atlanta newspaper.

One of the most notorious examples of an effort to rid Atlanta of homeless people was Project Homeward Bound. This effort, funded by Fulton County in which Atlanta is located, offered homeless people one-way tickets out of the city. Applicants required a referral by a local homeless shelter. They needed to choose a destination where they had either family or a job waiting—and they had to sign a paper promising not to return.

"It was a blatant case of discrimination," says Bruner. "Many people don't know what their rights are; they may have signed the paper and thought they really couldn't come back." Such action also heightens homeless people's feelings of worthlessness, she asserts. "They feel badly enough about themselves, and anyone treated like this would feel they were being dumped in the trash," says Bruner.

Task Force staff estimate that 15,000-20,000 men, women, and children in Atlanta have no permanent housing. The city's poverty rate is the second highest in the nation.

Making them 'disappear.' "There is no doubt the Olympics have hurt people," says Bruner. "The city has really tried to make poor people disappear." This has been accomplished in many ways, she explains. For example, what she calls "the first Olympic venue" built was a pre-trial detention center. It was obvious, says Bruner, the center was intended to house homeless people over the Olympics. Arrests of homeless people also skyrocketed in the weeks leading up to the Games.

"What we are experiencing is a double blow," says Bob Cramer, chair of the Task Force for the Homeless. "The Olympics have already taken away a substantial amount of affordable housing. Now homeless people, who have nowhere to go, are being pushed off the streets and into jail simply to make the city more attractive to tourists."

The Olympics have only made things worse for homeless people, says Bruner. And the work of the Task Force will only become more difficult and long-term. "The Olympics are wonderful in many ways," she maintains, "but they come at such a cost—both financial and human."—*Deborah Fast*

Virginia Mennonites meet for 86th assembly

Bergton, Va. (VMC)—Nearly 900 people braved two days of rain, unusual cold, and tornado watches to attend Virginia Mennonite Conference's 86th annual assembly, held July 17-21 at Highland Retreat.

The theme of the conference was "Passing on the Faith." Basil Marin of Immanuel Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, challenged the conference to pass on the faith by "going to the river"—a reference to the crossing of the Jordan by Joshua and the Israelites.

Passing on the faith through witness and service was the focus of Friday night's sermon by Loren Horst, pastor of Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville. The church "always has an outward trajectory, because of God's love," Horst claimed, adding that the missionary movement "is a radical movement that changes the lives of both the new convert, the missionary, and the whole church."

Information and action. "I invite us to be ever new and fresh in our appreciation of each other. Ninety-five percent of the time we are pulling in the same direction," said conference minister Owen Burkholder, addressing the body of more than 150 conference delegates. "We should carry each other's burdens at meetings—take advantage of a wonderful opportunity when we are gathered together, to be God's people."

Delegates passed several actions, including a proposal to establish a conference resource center and the transfer of Providence Mennonite Church, Newport News, from Atlantic Coast Conference to Virginia Conference.

—*Donald Clymer and Kristin Oberholtzer*

Making tortillas. *Lancaster, Pa. (EMM)*—Five-year-old Jordan Brislen, son of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) workers Mike and Cindy Brislen, practices grinding corn for making tortillas at an exhibit at the first-ever Festival of Culture, sponsored by EMM, July 13. The event occurred in conjunction with "Festival 96," a new version of the annual EMM world missions conference, and was held at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. The festival included more than forty international exhibits, storytelling, a musical drama, and evening messages by Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth With A Mission, and Don Jacobs, director of Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation.

- **MCC U.S. lengthens terms.** The Mennonite Central Committee U.S. executive committee recently approved a change from two-year to three-year terms for MCC U.S. Community Ministries service workers, outside of headquarter positions, for review in one year. The executive committee also approved a 1997 budget projection of $12.8 million. This represents a 3.2 percent increase over the 1996 budget and a 4-5 percent increase over 1996 projected contributions.

- **Lark Award given.** Victor and Virginia Vargas of Hubbard, Ore., and Ruth and Ernst Harder of North Newton, Kan., have received the 1996 James and Rowena Lark Award. The two couples, who share more than 55 years combined in urban ministry, were presented with the awards at the annual gatherings of their conferences in June. Ernst Harder received the award posthumously. The Lark Award is given annually by Mennonite Board of Missions to Mennonites who have demonstrated creative leadership in evangelism and church development in North America.

- **Conflict project begins.** Six Mennonite mediators recently met in Colorado Springs, Colo., to work on a church conflict resolution self-test and study guide. Developed by Marlin Thomas and several other Mennonite Conciliation Service mediators, the project is designed for use by congregational leaders wanting to deal with conflict. Organizers hope the project will be ready for use by the end of 1997. Congregations interested in being part of a field-testing program may contact Marlin Thomas at 719 380-1065.

- **Encyclopedia begins on Web.** The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada has launched a prototype of a Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia on the World Wide Web. Over 200 Canadian Mennonite congregations are listed in the encyclopedia, with about 10 additional congregations added each week. The address is: http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/MHSC/index.html

- **Pastor transitions:**

Raphael Barahona began as pastor of Iglesia Evangelica Emanuel, South Bend, Ind., on April 15.

Sylvia Shirk Charles was ordained June 29 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., to serve as student pastor at Goshen College. She terminated her position as part of the pastoral team at Waterford on June 30.

Eddie Graber was ordained April 28 as part of the pastoral staff at Bethel Mennonite Church, Odon, Ind.

Barry Loop ended a pastorate at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind., on May 31.

Ed Swartley terminated as pastor of Naubinway (Mich.) Mennonite Church on May 31.

Charles Watson ended a term as copastor at Paoli (Ind.) Mennonite Fellowship on April 30.

Linda Watson finished a term as copastor at Paoli Mennonite Fellowship on April 30.

Jerry Wittrig was ordained June 9 at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Harold Yoder ended a pastorate at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., on June 30.

- **Coming events:**

60th annual Indiana Mennonite women's missionary rally, Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind., Oct. 10. Three speakers will address the theme of women's wellness: Gladys Maina, Dawn Yoder Harms, and Christine Holsopple Kauffman. More information is available from 219 642-3924.

23rd annual quilt auction, Southwyck Mall, Toledo, Ohio, Oct. 19. Includes bazaar on Oct. 18-19 with other items and food available. Quilts to be sold will be displayed Aug. 30-Sept. 29 at the Owens-Illinois Gallery. Benefits Sunshine Foundation, Inc., in Maumee, Ohio, that serves people with developmental disabilities and their families. Information is available from 419 865-0251.

- **New books:**

Doing Life: Reflections of Men and Women Serving Life Sentences is a book of black-and-white portraits and interviews by Howard Zehr. Brief text accompanying the photographs includes the stories of prisoners about the crimes they committed and the loneliness of a life sentence. Available from Good Books at 717 768-7171.

The Amish: Origin and Characteristics includes eighteen studies by historians, sociologists, and other scholars about origins, religious particularities, and identity of the Amish. Contains papers from an international colloquium in France in 1993 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the beginning of the Amish movement. Available from Masthof Press, Route 1, PO Box 20, Mill Road, Morgantown, PA 19543-9701.

- **Job openings:**

Physical education teacher, Chicago (Ill.) Mennonite Learning Center. Part-time position with flexible hours is available for the 1996-97 school year. Send inquiries to Myrna Miller, assistant principal, CMLC, 4647 W. 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632.

Staff openings, Locust Grove Mennonite School, Smoketown, Pa. Positions are available for administrative assistant and a part-time teacher for gifted and talented students. Send résumé to 2257 Old Philadelphia Pike, Smoketown, PA 17576.

NEW MEMBERS

Albany, Ore.: Reba Stutzman

Beth-El, Colorado Springs, Colo.: Russell Conrad, Judy Conrad, Mary Yoder, Sharon Miller, and Laura Souder.

Chambersburg, Pa.: Alanna Martin, Melinda Martin, Denver Martin, Maria Roth, and Jerry Suffecool.

Des Moines, Iowa: Esther Roth and Renee Fields.

Ephrata, Pa.: Shannon Good, Wesley Hoover, P. Daniel Mast, Michelle Weaver, Curvin Ringler, Mary Weber, Rebecca Garman, and Lucy Rutt.

Holyrood, Edmonton, Alta.: Dennis Breen and Ron Taniguchi.

Portland, Ore.: Rebecca Propst and Douglas Campbell.

Wellman, Iowa: Rachel Ruth Miller.

West Zion, Carstairs, Alta.: Rod Geddert and Krista Geddert.

Zion Hill, Harrisonburg, Va.: Beth Bontrager, Jon Bontrager, James Churchwell, Danielle Crawford, Jason Haarer, Mandy Knight, Gayl Brunk, and Ken Brunk.

BIRTHS

Bumbaugh, Amy and Chris, Hagerstown, Md., Jacob Austin (second child), May 14.

Crouse, Lori Cline and Brian, Broadway, Va., David Andrew (third child), July 14.

Embry, April Waughtel and Patrick, Lancaster, Pa., Jordan Patrick (first child), July 2.

Gacy, Linda Kay Wile and William M. Jr., Souderton, Pa., William Jacob (first child), July 14.

Landis, Brenda Yoder and Keith, West Liberty, Ohio, Sarah Rose (second child), June 15.

Lehman, Ellen Madill and Mark, Kitchener, Ont., Sydnie Jane (first child), July 9.

Mast, Cheryl Yoder and Roger, Harrisonburg, Va., Grayson Yoder (second child), July 15.

McMaken, Tammy and Dan, Archbold, Ohio, Christopher Alan (fourth child), July 17.

Miller, Lena Fisher and Leon, Lancaster, Pa., Joel Christian (second child), June 23.

Nussbaum, Carla Wenger and Van, Mishawaka, Ind., Nathaniel John (second child), July 17.

Roth, Rhonda Friesen and Alan, Wood River, Neb., Ashlyn Rae (fifth child), July 7.

Sherman, Melissa Banzhoff and Anthony, Chambersburg, Pa., Brett Matthew (second child), July 11.

Slabaugh, Sandy Peachey and Bruce, Goshen, Ind., Mariah Joy (third child), July 8.

Steiner, Ellen Kehl and Doug, West Liberty, Ohio, Alexander James (first child), July 13.

Unruh, Lynn Lamberta and Lyonell, Colorado Springs, Colo., Mariah Joeann (first child), July 3.

Waidelich, Sherri Sauder and John, Wauseon, Ohio, Claire Johnessa Yiyuying (fourth child), born Dec. 21, 1995, received for adoption June 26.

Wanner, Christina Weaver and Scott, Akron, Pa., Joshua Todd (fourth child), May 28.

Weaver, Jeanette Tadeo and Paul, Cincinnati, Ohio, Alexander Joel and Benjamin Kenneth (second and third children), June 11.

Wyse, Robin Hall and Gary, Archbold, Ohio, Levi Jacob (fourth child), July 17.

Zimmerman, Marie Francois and Chuck, Blue Ball, Pa., Fabienne Marie (first child), July 12.

MARRIAGES

Bender-Sluka: Melissa Bender, Goshen, Ind. (Mennonite Church of Scottdale), and Joseph Sluka, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., June 8, by S. David Garber.

Blank-Byers: Henry Lee Blank, Chambersburg, Pa. (Chambersburg), and Debra Byers, Orange, Va. (Mount Hermon), June 29, by Jerry Roth, Eli Slabaugh, and Donald Breckbill.

Gamble-Steiner: Laura Gamble, Kokomo, Ind. (Presbyterian), and Matthew Steiner, Tulsa, Okla. (Bethel), April 20, by Walter Ungerer.

Haller-Zimmerman: Jodi D. Haller, Denver, Pa. (Ephrata), and D. Neil Zimmerman, Ephrata, Pa. (Hammer Creek), May 18, by M. John Nissley.

Henne-Reinford: Todd Henne, Louisville, Ohio, and Marsha Reinford, Louisville, Ohio (Stoner Heights), July 6, by Gerry Vandeworp, Ralph and Barb Reinford.

Hinze-Montague: Paul Hinze, Mikado, Mich. (Baptist), and Jenni Montague, Mio, Mich. (Fairview), June 22, by Randy Detweiler.

Hochstetler-Zendt: Douglas Ray Hochstetler, (Lower Deer Creek),and Heidi Ann Zendt (Lost Creek), June 9, by John Denlinger.

Kauffman-Lubbers: Tara Kauffman, Fairview, Mich. (Fairview), and Steve Lubbers, Grand Rapids, Mich. (Reformed), May 25, by Virgil Hershberger.

Miller-Porth: Mark Miller, Fairview, Mich. (Pine Creek Chapel), and Rosanne Porth, Fairview, Mich. (Fairview), June 8, by Virgil Hershberger.

Nolander-Rufenacht: Curtis Nolander, Two Harbors, Minn. (Lutheran), and Nedra Rufenacht, Archbold, Ohio (West Clinton), June 8, by James Roynon.

Parker-Williams: Shawn Parker, Fulks Run, Va., and Tonya Williams, Broadway, Va. (Zion), July 13, by Richard K. Early.

Redmond-Zimmerman: Amy Redmond, Sharpsville, Pa., and Donovan Zimmerman, Lititz, Pa. (Forest Hills), March 3, by J. Lester Graybill.

Weaver-Youndt: Clair N. Weaver, Ephrata, Pa. (Ephrata), and Gale C. Youndt, Ephrata, Pa. (Hinkletown), May 4, by Jerold Martin and Glenn Sauder.

DEATHS

Bachman, Verna A. Reeb, 76, Metamora, Ill. Born: Jan. 4, 1920, Roanoke, Ill., to Henry C. and Katie Kennell Reeb. Died: July 9, 1996, Peoria, Ill. Survivors—husband: Richard J. Bachman; children: James, Elaine Newcomer, Judi Carter, Carol Detweiler; brothers and sister: Arthur and John Reeb, Nellie Schertz; 14 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 12, Metamora Mennonite Church, by Robert Nolt. Burial: Stewart-Harmony Cemetery.

Denlinger, Verna Elizabeth Hostetter, 72, Chambersburg, Pa. Born: July 24, 1923, Gap, Pa., to Galen B. and Susie K. Hershey Hostetter. Died: April 21, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa., of a stroke. Survivors—husband: Roy D. Denlinger; children: Geraldine Frey, Marlin, Ronald, Janice Bricker, Suetta Grove, Darlene Meyers, Karen Lehman; brother and sisters: G. Hershey Hostetter, Eleanor Hershey, Virginia Neff, Sara Buckwalter, Lydia Denlinger, Elverta Horst, Emma Ranck; 28 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: April 25, Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, by Rob Cahill, Nelson Martin, and Richard Buckwalter.

Drasak, Phoebe Elizabeth Zook, 68, Edmonton, Alta. Born: April 19, 1928, Dodds, Alta., to John and Mary Lauber Zook. Died: July 12, 1996, Edmonton, Alta., of heart failure. Survivors—husband: Frank Drasak; son: Frank Dale; brothers and sister: Kenneth, Raymond, Jane Basgall. Congregational membership: Holyrood Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: July 16, Salem Mennonite Church, by Ray Landis.

Hochstetler, Owen I., 69, Victor, Mont. Born: Sept. 14, 1926, White Sulpher Springs, Mont., to John and Emma Birky Hochstetler. Died: July 2, 1996, Missoula, Mont. Survivors—wife: Bertha Brenneman Hochstetler; children: Glenna Nissley, Merlin, Marlene Combe, Grace Nisly, Jo Landis, Lucille Nisly, Doreen; brother and sister: Harold, Leona Oesch; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: July 6, Assembly of God, by Roy Hostetler. Burial: Corvallis Cemetery.

Hostetler, Dale J., 71, Dorchester, Neb. Born: March 26, 1925, to Grant and Sadie Schweitzer Hostetler. Died: May 17, 1996, Lincoln, Neb., from a staph infection. Survivors—wife: Imogene Stauffer Hostetler; children: Pat Hergenrader, Sally Kastanek, Robert D., Jerry L.; brother and sister: Eldon, Norma Jean Troyer; 9 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Congregational membership: Beth-El Mennonite Church. Funeral: May 21, Bellwood Mennonite Church, by John C. King and Robert Troyer. Burial: Milford Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Kline, James Ervin, 80, Hagerstown, Md. Born: Jan. 27, 1916, Big Pool, Md., to Burt and Cora Cassidy Kline. Died: July 12, 1996, Williamsport, Md., of a stroke. Survivors—daughter: Katherine E. Smith; 2 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Katherine R. Kline (wife). Congregational membership: Community Mennonite Church. Funeral: July 15, Gerald Minnick Funeral Home, by Roger I. Martin and Lewis M. Coss. Burial: Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

Martz, Hubert E., 75, Hagerstown, Md. Born: Aug. 19, 1920, Hagerstown, Md., to Roy and Addie Viola Moser Martz. Died: June 17, 1996, Hagerstown, Md., of a heart

SALT participants leave. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Twenty-eight people participated in a Serving and Learning Together (SALT) International orientation at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters July 8-12. Young adults in the SALT program live overseas for one year. Sixteen of this year's participants are affiliated with the Mennonite Church. They are:

First row: Mark Leaman to Egypt.

Second row (left to right): Heidi Beachy to Santa Cruz, Bolivia; Shannon Schell to Asunción, Paraguay; Melody Mast to Kenya; Matt Wiens to Asunción; Lyris Short-Goetzke to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Third row: Sarah Kingsley to Asuncion; Joyce Wyse to Calcutta, India; Joëlle Martin to N'Djamena, Chad; Chris Kennel to Bangkok, Thailand; Craig Martin to Jamaica.

Fourth row: Matt Burkey to Bolivia; Kelli Unsicker to Kingston, Jamaica; Todd Landis to Bolivia; Rachel Jones to Tanzania; Julianne Wolfe to Indonesia.

attack. Survivors—wife: Cora M. Green Martz; daughter: Mary Ann Martin; sister: Mamie E. Griffith; 2 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 18, Community Mennonite Church, by Adam R. Martin, Roger I. Martin, Lewis M. Coss, and Ray Phillips. Burial: Mt. Lena United Methodist Cemetery.

Miller, Susan "Susie," 62, Nappanee, Ind. Born: April 2, 1934, Kalona, Iowa, to Levi and Sarah Schrock Miller. Died: June 8, 1996, Nappanee, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Amos Miller; children: Sarah Miller, Jerry, Linda Kindrex, Sue White, Amos Laverne; brothers and sisters: Joe, Chris, Harvey, Levi Jr., Polly Mast, Mattie Mast, Barbara Miller, Sadie Elliott; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: June 11, North Main Street Mennonite Church, by Ken Bontreger. Burial: Union Center Cemetery.

Nafziger, Cora, 84, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Aug. 16, 1911, Archbold, Ohio, to Henry and Mary Sauder Nafziger. Died: July 12, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Funeral: July 14, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer and Lois Hartman. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Peters, Martha S., 76, Manheim, Pa. Born: April 21, 1920, Manheim, Pa., to Jacob and Ada Snavely Peters. Died: May 12, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Benjamin S., Amos S., Ruth Shellenberger, Elizabeth. Funeral: May 15, Buch Funeral Home, by George M. Hurst and Jay M. Peters. Burial: Hernley Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Schmidt, Virgil L., 81, Hesston, Kan. Born: April 8, 1915, Kiowa County, Kan., to Louis and Lodie Wedal Schmidt. Died: July 12, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—wife: Velma Troyer Schmidt; children: Charles, Kenneth, Marvin, Mark, Dale, Harlan, Genevieve Harmison, Joyce Twitchell, Carol Block, Alice Gardner; brothers and sisters: Vernon, Lloyd, Melvin, Chester, Irvin, Lena Good, Geneva Spicer; 26 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by one son. Funeral: July 16, Hesston Mennonite Church, by Wesley Jantz and James Carpenter. Burial: East Lawn Cemetery.

Sensenig, Titus M., 85, Lancaster, Pa. Born: Feb. 22, 1911, Blue Ball, Pa., to Henry M. and Mary Martin Sensenig. Died: May 22, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—wife: Ruth E. Lehman Leatherman Sensenig; children: Richard E., Kenneth V., Lamarr L., Daniel L., Ruth E. Burkholder; sisters: Lena Schnupp, Ruth Shirk, Phoebe Wenger; 19 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Edna Mae Lehman Sensenig (first wife). Funeral: May 26, Ephrata Mennonite Church, by M. John Nissley and Jeffrey High. Burial: Groffdale Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Shank, Luella Martin, 82, Chambersburg, Pa. Born: Aug. 13, 1913, Shippensburg, Pa., to Jacob B. and Minnie Smith Martin. Died: June 25, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa., of heart failure. Survivors—husband: Leonard Shank; children: Doris Fritz, Dorothy Crider, Darlene Rosenberry, Leon, Dolly Myers; brother and sister: David H. Martin, Mary Baer. Funeral and burial: June 27, Chambersburg Mennonite Church, by Roger Martin, Jerry Roth, Jere Horst, and Preston Frey.

Stine, Dorothy June, 75, Hagerstown, Md. Born: June 6, 1921, Sheffield, Iowa, to Jesse M. and Gladys Prudene Benson Stine. Died: July 7, 1996, Hagerstown, Md., of cancer. Congregational membership: Community Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: July 10, United Methodist Cemetery, by Lewis M. Coss.

Wyse, Marvin S., 71, Pettisville, Ohio. Born: Dec. 1, 1924, Stryker, Ohio, to Joseph and Mabel Short Wyse. Died: July 7,1996, Toledo, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Shirley Frey Wyse; children: Scott, Jon, Luana Esterline, Lisa Snook; brothers: Mahler, Warren; 6 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Anthony M. Wyse (son). Funeral: July 11, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer and Lois Hartman, Charles Gautsche, and Walter Stuckey. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

NO GOSPEL HERALD WILL BE PUBLISHED AUG. 13 WHILE WE TAKE A BREAK FROM OUR NORMAL WEEKLY SCHEDULE. OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL BE DATED AUG. 20.

Some principles for an Anabaptist witness to governing authorities

(continued from page 7)

the Jewish community in Susa to fast for three days in preparation for her advocacy before King Ahasuerus. Prayer can stretch our understanding to receive God's guidance and wisdom, moving us beyond our biases, preconceptions, and narrow self-interest. Praying helps us identify our own complicity with injustice and violence, freeing us from self-righteousness. Prayer energizes us and invites God to act in ways that transcend our limited circumstances, resources and abilities.

To engage in intercessory prayer is to acknowledge that we are not in control of history and cannot make history "turn out right." But there is one, who by his suffering love on the cross, has gained the authority and power to intercede in history's course and shape history's outcome. By asking God to act in Jesus Christ and by prayerfully becoming attuned to participate in what God is doing, we can be faithful and effective witnesses for transformation.

Guided by biblical teachings, stories, and principles, our prayerful witness to governing authorities should focus on the needs of the poor, the paths of peace, and the respect for life. While not excluding other concerns, these themes can form the core of our own involvement in policy advocacy, help us evaluate candidates and elected officials, and assist us in discerning the soundness of any group claiming to speak in the name of Christ for political change. Prayerfully looking to Jesus, Scripture, and the heritage of our faith will not ensure that we all agree on particular policies or candidates. But it will provide our advocacy with a solid foundation, help us avoid the "mudholes," and sometimes even bring us surprising experiences of the presence of God's kingdom on earth.

Martin Shupack serves as legislative associate for international affairs at the Mennonite Central Committee's Washington, D.C., office. He is the father of three, and his family attends Washington Community Fellowship.

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When the church won't buy your computer

"I will build my church," Jesus promised; "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18, KJV).

Not that those gates haven't tried. Since its beginning, forces from both without and within have pounded away at the very foundations of this church. If the New Testament is any indication, those from within can be the most insidious and destructive. At least the writers of the epistles take a lot of space dealing with what would erode that church from inside.

"Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels," Paul writes in 2 Tim. 2:23 (NRSV). To Titus (3:9), he says, "Avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless."

Stupid—that's strong language, some of the strongest I find in the Bible. Yet there it is, translated into plain English, for those who would cause disunity in the church.

One wonders what Paul would say today. Almost every month I get another report of a congregation threatening to leave an area conference. Or a conference split over a decision on faith or practice. Or an individual who has just *had* it.

The latest of these came to me in a letter from someone who said he was leaving the Mennonite church for "fellowship elsewhere." The continuing discussions about the military and church membership and about homosexuality have convinced him that "relativism seems to be the prevailing standard," that "the Mennonite church [is] drifting perilously close to a worldview in which nothing matters absolutely because nothing can."

With that letter on my desk, I sat up and took notice when I heard a testimony from Phil Calicrate at the annual sessions of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference in June. During a discussion about designated giving, Phil told how he had been assigned by his church, Prince of Peace Mennonite in Corvallis, Ore., to research what kind of computer the congregation needed.

Phil spent a lot of time doing that research. Then he took his suggestion to the congregation —and they turned him down. Phil didn't say why. What he did say was, "Boy, was I mad!"

Phil thought about turning his anger into action. He would buy the computer and donate it to the church. "Then I would withhold my tithe until the computer was covered."

What an ingenuous solution—but one that's been tried before. What congregation doesn't have a piano, carpeting, air conditioning, an organ, padded chairs, a "decent" copier . . . because someone decided what was needed—and moved anyway when the rest of the congregation said no?

"But then God spoke to my heart," Phil went on. "God asked: 'Do you want to be part of this community or not?' " Phil didn't buy the computer. "That's how I discovered there is a way to be part of the community and not insist on my own way," he said.

Of course, it's a long way from computers to issues of belief and practice. But Phil's testimony is an important one to hear. In a day of so much controversy, so much individualism, so great a tendency to do "my own thing," I find I must constantly ask: "What is this church to which I've committed myself?"

Is it some nebulous, undefined entity out there somewhere that I go along with as long as I agree? Or is it these real flesh-and-blood people I worship with every Sunday, people with whom I will inevitably disagree? Even more important, what does commitment to this church mean when we disagree?

I keep coming back to the answer Paul hints at in Eph. 5:29-32: "No one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it," Paul writes. Then he goes on to use marriage as an illustration for how we should care for the church—just as a man and a woman care for each other as for their own bodies.

That's difficult to understand—and to apply. Indeed, Paul calls it a "mystery." What I get out of it is that I am to be as concerned for the health of the relationships in the church as I am for how that church expresses its faith or how it puts its beliefs into practice. To pull out when things don't go my way is "stupid" (Paul's words, not mine).

The church will survive. Jesus has promised that. My task is to make sure I'm part of the builders, not those who are "prevailing against." With or without my computer.—*jlp*

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August 20, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

John Longhurst:
Mennonite—and proud of it 2

Harold Bauman:
Getting past the extremes to see what the Spirit is doing in new movements 10

Taking seriously the shift in world's religious map 12

Mennonite, BIC, and Amish numbers increase in past year 14

What's in a name?

Why churches do or do not use the word 'Mennonite'

Some congregations believe that using a denominational name hinders their outreach. Others say that Mennonite distinctives are precisely what it is that attracts people to attend their services.

by John Longhurst

Five hundred years after the birth of Menno Simons, why are so many of the Mennonite churches dropping their founder's name?

A search of various conference yearbooks shows that over half of Mennonite Brethren churches in the U.S. and Canada no longer have the word "Mennonite" in their names (182 out of 347 churches).

The figure is similar for Canada's Evangelical Mennonite Conference and Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference churches (24 out of 49 and 14 out of 29, respectively). However, the situation is the opposite for the Mennonite Church, where only 12 percent of 1,100 churches no longer use the name, and for the General Conference Mennonite Church, where only 47 of 405 churches no longer identify themselves as Mennonite in their names.

Churches which drop the word "Mennonite," are more likely to use "Community Church," "Bible Fellowship," or "Christian Fellowship" to describe themselves. Some have unique names such as The Meetingplace, the Church Without

Many churches are not just getting rid of the name to do better outreach. They also want "to put distance between themselves and Mennonite distinctives."

Walls, Harvest Celebration Center, or the Upper Room Church.

Impediment to outreach. The main reason for dropping the name Mennonite is the belief that it is an impediment to outreach.

"My experience is that people are at best confused or uninformed or at worst negatively inclined by the word 'Mennonite,' " says Ed Boschman, pastor of the Willow Park Community Church in Kelowna, B.C. "When they do know something about us, they think of us as being Germanic, an ethnic community. This creates hurdles rather than building bridges."

Until 1988 when it moved to a new facility, the 50-year-old church was known as the Willow Park Mennonite Brethren Church. Since that time the membership has almost doubled.

Irvin Wiebe is the former moderator of the Westside Community Church, formerly the Morden (Man.) Mennonite Brethren Church. He says the church dropped the word "Mennonite" because it "reinforced the notion that the church was only for those with Mennonite names. We wanted to be seen as a church for the whole community."

Wiebe says that since making the change five years ago, about half a dozen new people who don't have a traditional Mennonite background have come to the church, which was founded in the 1930s.

For Ewald Unruh, executive director of the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Board of Evangelism, choosing a name "isn't a simple question. Churches need to think about the context where they are being established." In some cases, he says, using the word "Mennonite" can aid in outreach, but in others it can hamper it. Almost no new Mennonite Brethren churches choose to use the name.

Sneaky evangelism? Some critics say that churches which go this route are being sneaky. But Boschman disagrees.

"We aren't trying to be sneaky about our denominational affiliation—it's printed on the materials we hand out on Sundays," he says. "We want to connect with people on the basis of our relationship to Christ, then share our Anabaptist story. By then we've already bridged."

Unruh uses the analogy of first and last names. "When I meet someone, I say my name

Mennonite—

Twenty years ago, I became a Mennonite. At the time, I had no idea what a Mennonite was. Until I joined, I didn't even realize that the various Mennonite churches in my hometown of St. Catharines, Ont., belonged to different conferences. I didn't know anything about the peace position. The idea of Christian service was completely foreign to me. The fact that the church was Mennonite wasn't my reason for joining, but neither did it keep me away.

It would be a better story if I had experienced an epiphany about Mennonite distinctives such as peacemaking. But I joined for the same reason many people join a church—I had a spiritual need, and the pastor and congregation were welcoming and caring. Only later did I discover things like the commitment to peacemaking.

When I first heard about it, I wanted to know more. I asked my new friends about it, but they were vague and noncommittal. They told me not to worry about it, that it wasn't important.

It was confusing at the time, but now I think they were probably afraid I would leave the church, since my family has a background of military service and I had once belonged to the Air Force cadets. But the opposite was true—I wanted to know more, and their oblique answers only made me search harder.

Today, I think I am thoroughly Mennonite. I graduated from a Mennonite college and have served with three Mennonite agencies. In my role directing media relations for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, I have even emerged as a spokesperson for Mennonites in Canada, including authoring a media guide about the church. It is certainly a daunting task.

is Ewald. If they want to know more about me, I tell them my last name. This places me in a family." The goal in church planting, he says, is "first to establish a congregational identity, then the denominational identity. It starts locally, then spreads out."

Menno Hamm, editor of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference publication *The Messenger*, says that in his conference "it's not a matter of churches wanting to hide their affiliation—most have it in smaller letters on the sign or stationery."

Feel good about themselves. Why have few churches in the Mennonite Church or General *(continued on page 4)*

and proud of it

I'm also proud to be Mennonite. I don't feel I need to hide it. The reporters across Canada whom I relate to have a great deal of respect for Mennonites because of the work of organizations like Mennonite Voluntary Service, Mennonite Disaster Service, and MCC. These agencies have done much to open doors for witness about faith across the country.

Churches which identify themselves as Mennonite are able to take advantage of the good will that these efforts generate among Canadians. Although I'm not ashamed to say I am a Mennonite, at the same time I'm sympathetic to arguments against using the word in church names.

I am mindful of the fact that only 40 years ago I would not have considered joining a Mennonite church in Canada since most still worshiped in German. Almost 30 years ago it was still an issue for some.

In 1977, when I attended my first Canadian Mennonite Brethren convention, some delegates still used German when addressing the group. My knees shaking, I went to a microphone and asked if people would use English only, since some of us didn't understand German. After the session a dear old saint approached me, wagged her finger in my face, and said, "How dare you tell us what language we can use!"

In some parts of Canada, Mennonites were isolationists for many years. Mennonite businesses hired only Mennonites. They avoided participating in some community activities for fear of being part of the world. In these places, the name "Mennonite" can evoke memories that can be an impediment to outreach.

I am also sympathetic because in some places Mennonites have projected a cultural image. There's no question that over time Mennonites have acquired cultural trappings and ethnic foods.

But I'm not convinced that being a culture is what Menno Simons had in mind when he served the struggling group of persecuted believers that took his name. A person who has Germanic origins, a story of sojourn in the former Soviet Union, and eats borscht and plooma moos they can appear Mennonite.

But that's not the most important thing. Does she know and love Jesus? Has he committed himself to a life of faith and discipleship? This, more than the ability to tell a low German joke, is a test of identity for me.

Today, with just over half of the world's Mennonites living in the Southern Hemisphere, the definition of Mennonite is undergoing some profound changes. It is just as valid to talk about Zairian Mennonite culture or Indonesian Mennonite culture as it is to talk about Germanic Mennonite culture.

What is a Mennonite food? Fried noodles, wild rice, groundnut stew—and verenike.

For me, being Mennonite is more than culture and ethnicity. But it's also more than being like all the other evangelical groups in North America today.

God has given Mennonites a unique message about peace and practical, hands-on service that isn't shared by many other denominations.

Many other church groups are asking us to help them understand more about how they can be peacemakers or encourage members to live their faith in word and deed.

It would be a shame if we couldn't tell them.

—John Longhurst. A Meetinghouse release.

Choosing a name for a congregation isn't a simple question. Churches need to think about the context they are in and what their purpose is.

Conference Mennonite Church dropped the name? Everett Thomas of the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries says, "Perhaps it's because we have a longer history in North America, dating back to the 1700s. Our roots are deep."

The Mennonite Church "has a keen sense of conference," says Thomas. "If a church decided to change its name, other churches would ask questions. There is a sense of mutual accountability."

He also thinks there is "a significant appreciation for the Mennonite distinctives" such as peace, practical service, and discipleship. He believes that advertisements about Mennonites which appeared in the media in the U.S., such as the one which promoted a "muscular Christianity," did as much to "help us feel good about ourselves as Mennonites as it helped people outside the church to understand who we are."

For Thomas, the name isn't an impediment to outreach. "The Mennonite Church is growing, not declining," he says. "We can do evangelism without giving up distinctives."

Tym Elias, staff person for outreach and church planting for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, agrees. "Our vision for who we are as a church has a lot to do with it," he says. "Our birthright is the Mennonite vision. People are attracted to that vision. Churches which emphasize that vision are growing."

Mennonite in more than name. Among the churches which are dropping the name are ethnic or cross-cultural congregations. These are the new Korean, Hispanic, Slavic, Chinese, Indonesian, and other churches which are choosing to affiliate with various Mennonite conferences.

Few use the word "Mennonite" in their name. This doesn't mean, however, that they don't prize Mennonite distinctives, according to Loyal Funk, who helps coordinate cross-cultural ministries for the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

"On issues like peace, the sacredness of life, or separation of church and state, they are more Anabaptist than most American Mennonite Brethren," he says, noting that the new Slavic churches will not permit people to join if they belong to the military and that the Koreans identify themselves as "evangelical Anabaptists."

As for why they don't use "Mennonite" in their names, Funk says, "that word conjures up a Germanic background that just doesn't suit them," he says. "We can't expect them to accept our cultural background."

Bucking the trend. Not every new church has dropped the name Mennonite. The Mennonite Brethren church in Moncton, N.B., used to call itself the Riverview Bible Church, but today it is the River of Life Mennonite Brethren Church.

Why the change? According to Chris Standen of the River of Life leadership team, "There are a lot of independent splinter churches in the city which don't have good reputations for longevity or financial credibility. As a result, many people are reluctant to visit them."

"Our former name, plus the fact we meet in a rented facility, made us sound like one of them," says Standen. "We believed it was important to show that we are affiliated with a denomination."

This spring the church did a door-to-door campaign to invite people to a free pancake breakfast. "About one in 10 asked who Mennonites are," he says. "It was a conversation starter."

A number of people were familiar with Mennonites because of the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which has placed volunteers in the city and recently was awarded a major contract to recycle tires and create jobs in the province.

"MCC's high profile helps us to connect with people," he says.

Another church bucking the trend is the Laotian Mennonite Church of St. Catharines, Ont. According to pastor Kuaying Teng, "For us, the name 'Mennonite' stands for peace." He says that many Laotians like himself have experienced conflict and violence. "They want peace. When they hear what being Mennonite stands

for, it opens a door for conversation about our faith."

What about the future? Funk fears that for U.S. Mennonite Brethren the name change is symbolic of a changing relationship to larger conference bodies. "We are becoming more like a federation of churches, not a denomination. We used to live and die by the conference dues, but today churches pick and choose what they will support. Half of the churches give hardly anything to the conference."

In the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, "for some the discussion is about whether we are Mennonites or evangelicals," says Hamm.

For Elias, changing the name "strikes at the heart of who we are and who we want to be. Will we go mainstream evangelical or will we be stewards of our tradition? We have received a calling from Christ to share our unique faith in the world." He adds, "I don't know of any Alliance churches which are ashamed to call themselves Alliance."

Harry Loewen, editor of the book *Why I Am a Mennonite* (Herald Press, 1988), feels strongly that many churches are not just getting rid of the name to do better outreach but also "to put distance between themselves and Mennonite distinctives. This is unfortunate because many people are interested in our heritage. I wonder if these churches realize what they are losing."

Loewen recently retired after holding the chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, Man., for 18 years. "I met many Mennonite youth in my classes who wondered why their churches had never told them the Mennonite story. Once they knew, they were proud to have that radical Christian background."

John Longhurst, Winnipeg, Man., is media relations director for MCC Canada. This article is a Meetinghouse release.

"Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. Happy is the mortal who does this, the one who holds it fast."
—Isaiah 56:1-2a, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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I heartily affirm ***A Code of Ethics for Computer Users*** printed with the article ***Coming to Terms with Computer 'Stuff'*** (June 11). I recommend that all serious computer users frame and hang this code near their monitors.

Like TV in the 1950s and since, the computer will almost infinitely increase our field of knowledge and entertainment. We can easily be uncritical as we become enthralled by these media, both TV and computers.

Just as TV entertainment is not representative of real life—someone has said we'd all be killed in 46 minutes if TV were real—so the Internet. It can be a nearly unlimited field for good. But I hope Mennonites do much better in their use of the Internet than we have done with TV.

Noah Hochstetler
Dangriga, Belize

Scott Holland's letter (June 11), in which he calls Anabaptist theology cultural—and advocates cultural disarmament in our discipleship and peace witness—raises a couple of questions.

How does one disarm? Deny roots? Is it even possible? Or is culture so embedded in the human condition that we deceive ourselves into thinking we can neutralize it? Perhaps other cultural sensitivity efforts are more realistic.

Also, why are beliefs jelled and claimed in the 14th century (even by a "sectarian, perfectionistic, peasant culture"—Holland's phrase) so difficult for modern Mennonites to affirm?

Holland's last sentence begins, "Since peace has destroyed many . . ." Is this an allusion to Dan. 8:25, which Rudy Wiebe also used for his novel? If so, this strange phrase of Old English is being used to make a point that the text does not support. "Peace" in the KJV reading seems to mean "unaware," i.e., no warning given that the destroyer is at hand. Wiebe can perhaps claim poetic license, but to do so in a theological discussion is another matter.

Let me affirm Holland's parting thought: "that we too are part of the great church of saints and sinners—but mostly sinners desperately needing God's grace."

John A. Hertzler
Mathews, Va.

The letter above first appeared in our July 23 issue, but it had several sentences missing. We're blaming the error on a computer glitch, which we're still trying to figure out and understand. Meanwhile, because the missing sentences made the letter virtually unintelligible, we're printing it again. Our apologies to the author.—Editor

We Are Free to Do Whatever We Want

(July 16)

Thank you, Alan Kauffman, for this understanding of law versus grace. I wish I would have learned these truths many years ago. But I am thankful that I am now becoming more free of a life "bound tight, suffocated, and mummified by religion." It has not been easy to "throw off the shackles of the 'thou shalts' and the 'thou shalt nots,' " but I'm making progress.

I do hope that "what the church is about these days is not redefining sin but redefining grace" and that we are "broadening the potential boundaries of God's grace." But sometimes it seems to me that the church is again becoming "burdened by the yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1).

Yes, "Christianity is not a religion of rules by which to live; it is the experience of love that liberates us to freely respond to God's gift of grace." That freedom liberates me to love all people and to allow each one to travel along at the pace best suited for them in their journey with God.

Roberta Showalter Kreider
Sellersville, Pa.

In this article, the author says that "the debate to properly respond to the gift of God's grace is like a bare wire; sparks fly, emotions flare up, and religious fervor flares." Perhaps part of the reason comes from an imbalance in addressing the subject.

As I read this article, I felt it was more about throwing off "thou shalts" and "thou shalt nots" than about the liberating grace of God that overcomes sin. While that may not have been the intent, that's what I got.

Redefining grace may be important. But it must be done by "handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). I don't believe Paul's Galatian letter is instructing Christians to throw away "dos" and "don'ts" after being liberated from sin. That would not be consistent with Paul's other writings.

Yes, justification comes through faith in Jesus Christ. But in the same Galatian letter in which Paul stresses freedom, he writes, "Only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh." Then he writes, "Through love serve one another." That sounds like a "do" to me.

Paul tells the Galatians that if they practice immorality, impurity, sensuality, . . . and a host of things like these, they will not inherit the kingdom. This sounds like some rather strong "don'ts."

Maybe "Christianity is not a religion of rules by which to live." But it certainly is a way in which to walk.

Perhaps there are those in the church who are keeping Old Testament laws in hopes of enhancing their salvation. But I do not see that as the serious issue of the day. I'm with those who wonder why sin isn't sin anymore.

Another concern is the evidence of the works of the flesh in the church that should be taken captive to obedience to Jesus Christ. I find this article does not give much encouragement to restrain these works of the flesh.

Simon Schrock
Fairfax, Va.

What's in a Border? (June 25 and July 2). So we end one division with merger but foster a new one. Why set up two denominational exclusive clubs—one U.S., the other Canadian?

Let's forget national boundaries. The church does not need worldly divisions. To do so is to make for disunity.

And what's wrong with the name: the Mennonite Church? Have we lost good common sense, wisdom, and the counsel of God in our church affairs?

Wilmer D. Swope
Leetonia, Ohio

Isn't it a bit of a stretch to publish a letter by "Name withheld" (July 2) criticizing Eric Kouns for having a judgmental attitude in his letter (May 28)? Is this a new policy—allowing one to write from anonymity while includ-

ing the name of another in a tone of criticism?

As a friend of Kouns, I can assure "Name withheld" that Kouns has much to offer the church—providing listening can be accomplished without getting too bent out of shape when raw nerves are touched.

Eugene R. Witmer
Smoketown, Pa.

I appreciated your editorial ***A Better Light Than Fire!*** (July 9), expressing solidarity with those whose churches have been burned and wanting to make a statement against racism.

I was saddened however, by these words: "Many of us must admit that we live . . . where most people are like us: white, middle-class, relatively well-off." If *Gospel Herald* is the publication of the Mennonite Church in North America—and not of the white Mennonites of North America—you would demonstrate it better by choosing language that includes the non-white Mennonites in your "us."

The same could be said for being inclusive of Mennonites who are not middle-class or relatively well-off.

Martha Yoder Maust
Indianapolis, Ind.

The other month I wrote, affirming your editorial ***It Doesn't Have to Be a Long, Hot Summer*** (Mar. 12), which called for not making decisions out of anger and fear.

After reading the response of the Hispanic and African-American churches in ***Illinois Churches Protest Keeping Two Congregations*** (July 16), I see that there is also danger if we wait too long to process the issue of homosexuality in the church.

Our brothers and sisters on one side or the other may well leave after we process. But let's not wait so long that they leave before we ever do.

Harold N. Miller
Corning, N.Y.

Theron Schlabach must be thanked for sharing ***My Religio-Socio-Political Creed on Social Responsibility*** (July 16). He reminds us that respecting the dignity of persons is an obvious component of Christian discipleship. And what he says is at the heart of Christian morals.

This should be true in any denomination, though many Christians are sidetracked by ideologies and institutions. A simple truth like John 3:16 puts people ahead of politics and profits.

If one asks "What would Jesus do?" one is really asking, "What does Jesus see?" This leaves us with a truly daring vision, since it challenges all of us who would confine Jesus within our tidy conventions of traditional values or political correctness.

Bill Jarrell
Greensboro, N.C.

Let *Gospel Herald* herald the gospel, not such things as ***Mennonite M & M's*** (July 16). That didn't inspire me or give me a spirit of praise, a deeper understanding for the Mennonite faith, or awe for God.

"I pray that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment."

Bertha Miller
Nampa, Idaho

It may seen prudent and even redemptive for various conferences to set up a hotline with an 800 number through which sexual misconduct by ministers may be reported to a central office (see *Intervention Planned* in "Mennoscope," July 16). But could such a procedure suggest a level of distrust which is less than respectful and kind? I think so.

Of course, ministers may err. But are there not ways to respond to inappropriate behavior at the congregational level—and, if necessary, by individual conferences—that are more sensitive and human than to make routinized long distance calls?

Furthermore, why pick on ministers? Of course, they are public figures. But so are teachers, physicians, social workers, entrepreneurs, and bankers—all of whom are equally responsible for sexual probity within the body of Christ.

J. Lawrence Burkholder
Goshen, Ind.

What a delight to read Elaine Maust's testimony, ***She Said 'Yes'! She Said 'Yes'!*** (July 23).

During the decade I have taught at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, I have only ever known one woman who entered seminary with a fully developed sense of call to pastoral ministry—that is, with both an inner and an outer call. What is far more common is for women to arrive with almost no outer confirmation or encouragement. Instead they treasure a fragile inner call to ministry and know that study is the next step. It takes a heaping measure of trust in God to proceed on such a slim basis.

What happens during the next three years is nothing short of miraculous. Nurtured by a supportive community, these women plunge into rigorous Bible study, take on history and theology, and learn to pray diligently. As they practice ministry skills under supervision, they discover they indeed can be ministers. For the first time, they hear the church's words of affirmation.

If the angels rejoice over sinners who repent, they surely also rejoice when one of God's children discovers who she was created to be. Blessings to Elaine—and all her tribe!

Marlene Kropf
Elkhart, Ind.

In response to the letter by Larry Hauder (July 23), I find it sad to think that when those who experience a new work of God in their lives share that joy and enthusiasm

(continued on page 9)

Pontius' Puddle

the difference value

Mennonite education

- As another school year begins, the Mennonite Board of Education honors the many students, parents, teachers and staff, administrators, and board members involved in education.
  We value education.

- Generations ago church leaders believed education was so important that they started church schools to help pass on the faith. MBE keeps the schools and the church connected.
  We value the Mennonite church.

- In the year leading up to Orlando '97, we want you to learn more about the work of MBE and our church schools—elementary, secondary, colleges, and seminaries. Watch for us.
  We value Mennonite education.

MBE *education for the Mennonite Church*

(continued from page 7)

with others in the church, it causes feelings of spiritual inadequacy or inferiority. Rather I believe the message that is intended is: "we've found spiritual bread; come and feast with us."

I do not find Hauder's questioning the theology of Promise Keepers credible. I've carefully read the Promise Keepers statement of faith, studied the seven promises, and attended two Promise Keepers conventions. I find that all teaching urges men of God to love, honor, and respect our wives, our children, and our Christian brothers—especially the latter who are persons of color.

That is also the gospel message of Jesus Christ. If Promise Keepers can reach men with that message—even though it's not through the institutionalized church—we ought to be praising God.

David H. Clymer
Shirleysburg, Pa.

Indiana-Michigan Conference Passes Statement on Homosexuality and Membership; Future Unclear (July 23). I applaud the leadership of Indiana-Michigan Conference for the way they are handling the issue of same-sex orientation. Not allowing this controversial and very complex issue to degenerate into either an either-or, yes-or-no vote is commendable and Christlike.

There is plenty of biblical material about ethical and moral values, dignity, and respect for our uniqueness without having to de-christianize anyone. Let's truly believe that God's Spirit will give counsel and direction in the midst of our praying, discerning, and working together.

Samuel J. Troyer
Chambersburg, Pa.

I like the idea suggested by E. J. Leinbach in his letter (July 23) that the new integrated denomination be called "The Mennonite Church."

With this name we would then be known as Mennonites, just as members of the Presbyterian Church are know as Presbyterians. Through the years we have, in general, been called Mennonites. So it seems appropriate for us to continue to be referred to in this way.

Paul Swope
North Lima, Ohio

I'm writing about Tom Finger's response (***The Place to Begin Mennonite Theology,*** July 30) to J. Denny Weaver's essay (***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** Jan. 23). I can understand why a liberal church would want to be imprecise enough to avoid divisions. But Finger avoids Weaver's questions about the cross.

Finger says that we "appropriate his atoning death." Implicit in that language is a God-helps-those-who-help-themselves approach. That holds God's love hostage to our response. And it begs the question whether a private, "non-church" response will be adequate.

Despite his frequent mention of the deity of Christ, Finger avoids what it was that the cross taught us about deity. Where evangelicals (and the Catholic creeds and sacraments) think of the cross as the sacrifice that a violent God demanded, many of us Mennonites have learned that it was humankind that sacrificed Jesus.

Finger also leaves the impression that Christians have only two choices: getting people saved or influencing Washington, D.C. Since our beginnings in Europe, we Anabaptists have known that our gathering for worship is where the action is—and the politics!

I suppose it is important to qualify everything so neither side ever gets out of proportion. But if postmodernism teaches us anything, it is that we are all out of proportion. We must not be too civil about what we practice. It is only as a lopsided Anabaptist body that we will best serve the world.

Mark McCulley
Ephrata, Pa.

Through North Dakota. On Amtrak.

("The Last Word," July 23)

This editorial raises crucial questions: "How are we different from the world? What does it mean to be separate?"

Mennonites have abandoned many of our past practices, and we are now grasping for ways that distinguish us as the people of God. May I suggest that we reinstate the notion that a Christian is known by *behavior*?

I am aware this emphasis is currently out of fashion. As our behavior deteriorates, our theology changes. While we formerly affirmed that the essence of Christianity is discipleship, we have now joined the multitudes who separate faith and works. The grace of God apparently covers everything. We make excuses for even the most outrageous kinds of behavior.

Mennonites in the past were known to be honest. Very seldom did you hear one use curse words or obscenities. Sexual infidelity was a rarity. Self-indulgent materialism was frowned upon.

If we reemphasized Christian behavior today, more persons might again be asking us, "Why are you different?"

Abraham K. Gehman
Bally, Pa.

This editorial was well-written, thought-provoking, and carried important ideas of discipleship.

My wife had the experience of having her doctor question her about Amish and Mennonites. He asked her if our way of dress was cultural or religious. She told him it was a matter of faith and commitment. And she was able to tell the doctor what the Lord meant to her.

That happened when she went for a scan in relation to bone cancer that she had experienced. And that particular scan turned out to show no more evidences of the cancer!

I am a stranger and a pilgrim in this world. It helps me to keep life in focus when I read encouragement such as you had in this editorial. May we have more.

Daniel V. Yoder
Dover, Del.

I read your editorial with a smile on my face. Had you been dressed like a "plain man," the other "plain man" might have asked you questions about yourself. If you had been dressed like the editor of a conservative group—or in a tie and coat—the "plain man" might have had other questions.

May I suggest that your future trips, through the friendly skies, be taken on a Boeing 737 or a 757. Then when a "plain person" is asked who they are and what they believe, you'll be able to hear their response. Their answers will not be interrupted by a noisy rail joint!

Gordon R. Beidler
Barto, Pa.

The future of denominations:

Getting past the extremes to see what th

Postdenominationalism is one of the fastest growing segments of Christianity today. How denominations respond could well determine their futures.

by Harold Bauman

Denominations are in decline. Loren Meade says so. The director of the Alban Institute says that denominational offices and mission boards will survive only if they help congregations do their mission, rather than seeing congregations as providing resources for denominational structures to do their thing.

The center of power is shifting from denominational offices to large churches and their pastors, says Lyle Schaller, a consultant for numerous denominations.

Another evidence of a potential shift from denominational structures is the gathering of pastors for spiritual renewal, for ministry to one another, and for an apostolic networking and ministry. These needs are often not met in annual conference gatherings and monthly area council meetings or by conference staff and overseers.

At times pastors of other denominations with kindred spirits are involved with Mennonite pastors in such networking. There is a desire for spiritual nurturing, interdependence, and accountability beyond what denominational patterns provide.

Is this a rejection of conferences? It may seem to be, but the motivation is usually not that. Rather, it is a longing for something that people are not finding in the conference structures and ethos.

A National Symposium on the Postdenominational Church was held, May 21-23, 1996, in Pasadena, Calif. Sponsored by the Fuller Theological Seminary's Office of Continuing Education in Ministry and Global Harvest Ministries, this event attracted more than 500 persons from the U.S. and other countries.

Panels of four persons dealt with areas of the growing postdenominational movement. The areas included: postdenominationalism in the 20th-century context, apostolic networks, postdenominational worship, prayer in postdenominational churches, vision for the nations, planting churches and reaching the unchurched, cells in postdenominational churches, spiritual phenomena, lay ministry, leadership training, and postdenominationalism across cultures.

The panels provided an opportunity to hear pastors of growing postdenominational churches, some larger and some smaller, as well as leaders of movements providing resources for postdenominational churches.

This movement has been reported as the fastest growing segment of Christianity. It has been described as having many of the characteristics of the early church and as a restoration of radical Christianity. These descriptions come because of these characteristics of the postdenominational church:

1. Interdependence. There is a strong sense of interdependence among many of these churches. They do not accept the charge that they are independent. There is an awareness that each needs the other as churches in the body of Christ. The apostolic networking is a major way to depend on each other.

2. Apostolic ministry. There is a recognition of the office and gifts of the apostle. Apostles are those who are chosen and anointed by God, whose anointing is recognized and affirmed by those who are served. They bring spiritual wisdom and counsel beyond ministry skills and methods. Apostles with prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers work in a cooperative ministry. These people, along with the elders of a church, provide vision and broad counsel in congregational life. Churches with apostolic patterns characterize the postdenominational movement.

3. Holy Spirit renewal. More than 80 percent of these churches participate in the Holy Spirit renewal. Church life is characterized by a dynamic of praise and joy in worship, a motivation to minister to one another, and a desire to share the good news of life in Christ with others. Whether worship in these churches will be designed as a reaction to traditional worship, or whether with its new freedom it can minister to a variety of personalities and tastes re-

mains to be seen. At least the focus is on participation in worship by everyone and not on performance by the few.

4. Outreach. Outreach to the unsaved is raised to a much higher priority than in most other churches. There is a strong desire that millions should come into the joy of the Christian life and be prepared for eternity. There is also a desire to participate in the hastening of the Lord's return when all language groups will have heard the gospel. Congregations want direct contact with missionaries they send out, rather than working with proxy mission boards. A basic mark of postdenominational churches is a passion for the nations.

5. Cell groups. Central to the life and outreach of postdenominational churches is cell life. This is not just adding small groups to existing congregational programs. Weekly cell meetings are viewed as having importance equal to that of the corporate gathering on Sunday morning with its celebrative worship and exposition of the Scriptures. Cells are crucial for giving mutual edification, support, and evangelizing—inviting relatives, friends, neighbors, and colleagues at work to visit. The cell model churches are the fastest growing churches around the world. When people come to Christ, they already have a place of belonging and a place for training in discipleship.

6. Training. There is great emphasis on training: training members to release their gifts in ministry and training persons in leadership ministry. There is a strong desire not to fall into the patterns of paid ministers doing the ministry to which members are called. Leaders are trained primarily by working with mentors and secondarily by taking academic courses in some training institution.

7. Prayer. The work of these churches is undergirded by a great amount of prayer. There is a strong awareness of spiritual warfare, both against the evil powers over our cities and countryside and against the devil's delight in passive consumer-oriented church members not involved in evangelism or spiritual warfare.

Just as there are similar characteristics of postdenominational churches, there are also areas of considerable diversity among them.

One area of diversity is in regard to authority. For some, the apostle's authority is the final one. For others, the apostle with the pastor and elders of the church make the final policy decisions. For still others, the apostle, the pastor and elders consult with the congregation sufficiently so that the decision is of one mind, even though the leadership body makes the decision. The variety will likely continue as experience with apostolic networking grows.

What should be our response to this new postdenominational movement? Whether denominational structures will resist change and wither, or whether they will become resources to congregations with a new vision remains to be seen. The churches in the new apostolic pattern are people desperate for God. God is dealing with desperate people willing to pray for a breakthrough. These people are open to change.

All organizations have within them the seeds of death. Whether they are death-bound depends upon how they handle change and transitions. Change will cause us to grow or it will crush us.

As with the charismatic renewal, we have the option of paying little attention to this worldwide movement and allowing the extremes in the churches in the new apostolic patterns to turn us off. We also have the option of getting past the extremes and our fears to see what the Holy Spirit is doing in this movement and how we can open ourselves to its best so that the Holy Spirit can work through us.

I pray we will choose the second option.

Harold Bauman is a semi-retired pastor and Mennonite church leader who lives in Goshen, Ind. He serves as overseer of four congregations in Indiana-Michigan Conference.

Consultation looks at how to respond to shift in world's religious map

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS-MBM)—How do Christians take seriously the Copernican shift in the world's religious map? How do they take the global church seriously?

These and other questions highlighted one session of the recent conference, "Partnership in Mission and Evangelism: Preparing for the 21st Century," at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). The July 19-21 seminar featured nearly 50 participants and included input from the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

No longer a majority. John Lapp, executive secretary of MCC, said North American Christians need to realize that they are no longer the majority. "In 1900, most Christians were in Europe and North America," Lapp said. "By 1995, most Christians were to be found in the two-thirds world of Africa, Asia, and Latin America."

Statistics like these, Lapp said, represent the Copernican shift present in our world today.

Nicholas Copernicus was the 16th-century Polish astronomer, mathematician, medical doctor, and theologian who proposed the then unheard-of idea that the earth rotated on a fixed axis and revolved around the sun. The dethronement of the earth from the center of the universe created shock and disbelief, demanding that the world change its view.

Partnerships. For Lapp, the shift of Christians from northern Europe and North America to Asia, Africa, and Latin America, requires a similar shift for those in a new geographical minority.

"In Europe, there is a sense of history," Lapp said. "In the two-thirds world, there is a dynamic sense to the church. The majority of the Christians in the world are poor. They have been the dominated peoples in the world's history. Frequently, they were dominated by the peoples from our society. There is a dramatic shift. How do we take it seriously?"

This shift is difficult for North Americans and northern Europeans, according to Ron Yoder, MBM vice president for partnership services. "There are cultural and personality conflicts and intercultural communication difficulties," Yoder said. "We need to create collaborative mission strategies for the future that allow the mission actors to combine resources to prevent unhealthy competition. We also need an internationalization of mission workers that does not currently exist."

"Whatever happens, the common vision must be proclaimed in the marketplace," said Gerald Pillay, a theology professor visiting from the University of South Africa. "It cannot be proclaimed in the limited space of mission organizations. Partnerships cannot be a wishy-washy affair, because they are a part of the covenant."—*Christy Risser*

Training church planters. *Lancaster, Pa. (EMM)*—Yassir Hamid Mekki, Adanech and Kinfe Zewdie (holding son, Gideon), and Thomas Magodi share experiences during a break at School for Apostles, sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions home ministries department, July 15-19. Over 100 pastors, church planters and coaches, and others interested in cell-based churches gathered from across the United States for the week-long seminar that focused on how to make churches launching centers of mission. John Hurston and Karen Hurston, who work with the 750,000-member Yoido Full Gospel Church in Korea, led sessions on encouraging new leaders, prayer, and evangelism through small groups.

"It's often more important what cell leaders do between cell meetings than during cell meetings," said Karen, adding that leaders must be teachable and enthusiastic. Betty Charles, former mission worker in Brazil and founder of Abundant Living Ministries, spoke to the group about church planter marriage and family issues; and Lawrence Chiles, pastor of South Christian Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., gave the final address based on Isaiah 40. The next School for Apostles is scheduled for July 14-18, 1997.

Becoming acquainted with the global church

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS-MBM)—John Lapp, retiring executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee, made the following suggestions at the July 19-21 conference about mission partnership on how North Americans and Europeans can take the new global church seriously:

- Thank God for the great work of God's Spirit and the work of Christian missions.
- Begin a systematic way of becoming acquainted with the global church. Get to know members of the church in other parts of the world. Go to them and invite them to visit here.
- Recognize that the realities of North America and Europe differ greatly from the reality lived by people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
- Make a special effort to break out of the prisons of an ethnocentric view of the world. Recognize that the Western world is not everything and does not hold ultimate truth in its history and theology.
- Transcend culture-bound churches. Be willing to learn new languages and search for new forms of church life.
- Create new forms of governance and new patterns of getting things done. Intentionally include people from different cultural and international experiences.
- Remember that the church has always been gloriously diverse and that our experience is not normative for others.
- Involve congregations alongside of mission organizations.

Les and Gwen Gustafson-Zook lead the Portland congregation in singing.

Church meets in parking lot in act of solidarity

Members of Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church held their church service in the parking lot on July 28, in solidarity with those whose church buildings were destroyed in a wave of arsons this year. Following is one member's report.—Editor

We came to the church parking lot bringing lawn chairs and blankets. Sporting shady hats and sunglasses, we sat in a semicircle on the warm asphalt and waited for the singing to begin. Not far into the service, a bright red firetruck, siren blaring, sped past. The local fire station is just a few blocks away, and we're used to the noise. But this time we heard it in a different way; the topic of fire was much on our minds. We had chosen to close our church for a day, in solidarity with our African-American sisters and brothers who have lost their churches to arson. Passersby could see posters taped across the church door: "Church Closed Because of Fires In. . ." The posters listed the names of dozens of African-American churches burned by arson in recent months—including one here in Portland.

The theme for our Sunday service was from Romans 8, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God." Larry Hauder, Pacific Northwest Conference minister, brought a message of affirmation from the conference, and a storyteller shared a parable of bridge building. At the conclusion of the service, we collected offerings to be shared among several church rebuilding projects, including Mennonite Disaster Services' work at Mt. Zoar Baptist Church in Boligee, Ala.

Three television news crews hovered at the edges of the parking lot, filming the service. A report about the service was broadcast during a TV newsbreak during the Olympics that evening.

We've returned to indoor services, but our work to understand and work against racial division has only begun. This fall's Sunday school for adults will include a class on racism. On July 28 we prayed: "Give us your passion for justice, your love to break down the walls of separation, your joy in the freedom of many different people becoming people of God." We hope to put that into practice.—*Linda Goertz*

Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church held services in the parking lot on July 28 in solidarity with those whose church buildings were destroyed in a wave of arsons this year.

Students model peace for Arabs and Jews

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—For the fourth year, Palestinian Christian students from Bethlehem Bible College and Messianic Jewish students from King of Kings College in Jaffa, Israel, have met despite obstacles of terrorism and government restrictions.

Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) worker Garry Denlinger, assistant academic dean at King of Kings College (KKC), arranged the May 6 retreat with Bishara Awad, president of Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) in the West Bank, where the gathering took place.

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The annual day of fellowship began four years ago when Denlinger and KKC sought a bridge-building activity to "help Palestinian Christians and Messianic Jews experience the reality of unity in the Messiah."

This year's retreat originally was scheduled for March 20. But two terrorist bus bombings in Jerusalem and a third incident in Tel Aviv led to the event's cancellation.

"[Despite] the political unrest and violence, many at both colleges began praying that the retreat could be rescheduled," Denlinger says. "The BBC students were barred from crossing the checkpoint a few hundred yards from their campus, but word came that Israelis were being permitted to cross into Bethlehem."

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Two students at KKC did not want to risk the danger involved in such a contact. "One guy was insistent he was going to take arms along or he was not going to go, [but] the Lord softened his heart for us," says Denlinger, who arranged the gathering. "[They] changed their minds as they realized that their presence at BBC would be an encouragement to the Palestinian Christians."

When the day came, a student choir from BBC greeted their Messianic Jewish visitors with a Hebrew song "Havenu Shalom Alechem" ("We Bring You Peace"). Bishara challenged the students to pray for peace and to do their homework: the assignment from God is to love one another. Other activities included worship, singing, talking, prayer, playing together, and sharing an Arabic meal.

—*Tom Price*

Sabbatical renews Northern Ireland mediator for work

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—As Derek Poole guided his canoe through North American wilderness with Mennonite seminary students, the Northern Ireland peace mediator discovered something that prepared him to return home to a collapsed peace process.

In boundary waters near Minnesota with Old Testament professor Perry Yoder and fellow students at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Poole best fulfilled his purposes for a one-year sabbatical: rest and theological reflection for continued ministry in Northern Ireland.

'It is somehow alright.' "In peace, justice, and reconciliation work, you become very dependent on your own energy, creativity, and imagination. You feel the urgency of everything. There was something about that week that helped me to surrender [to God], to feel that it is somehow all right," says Poole. His sabbatical was coordinated by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) on behalf of several northern Indiana churches.

"Peace mediation can, in fact, get stuck in an abstract idealism about how the world should be," Poole says. "Peace mediation is filled with compromise and loose ends . . . . It is never tidy."

The revelation came just in time. Poole, coordinator of Greenfield Community, a Christian fellowship working for peace, justice, and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and his wife, Arlene, had grieved over the end of the 22-month ceasefire early this year. "When the ceasefire ended, we knew that was the beginning of the return to violence in our own country," Poole recounts. "All of the grief returned—the grief of people who you know have died, of people who have been maimed for life."

In recent weeks, riots exploded in their home community of Portadown, 30 miles southwest of Belfast. Catholics protested a march through their neighborhoods by the Orange Order, a Protestant fraternal society—an event first barred and later allowed by local police. In 1995, Poole had worked with Joe Campbell, Ireland program coordinator for MBM and Mennonite Central Committee; Brendan McAllister, of the Mediation Network; MBM worker Joe Liechty; and others in negotiating a peaceful resolution: a silent march along the historic route.

Derek Poole, Northern Ireland mediator, was on sabbatical in the U.S. last year.

"That mediation work proved to be historic," says Poole, who kept a presence in both Catholic and Protestant camps, correcting rumors and misinformation. This year, however, the Orange Order refused to participate in any mediation efforts, and police handling of the incident exacerbated the situation, according to Poole. "It established the same old patterns we have dealt with for the last 25 years," he says. "No one would give in."

A third way. In his work with Greenfield Community, Poole has sought to find a "third way"—an alternative to the violence of Catholic and Protestant paramilitaries. He sought to continue that search in his studies at AMBS. "I have been renewed in the hope that . . . this alternative vision of peace and justice, is not a futile thing," says Poole.

Now back in Ireland, Poole has begun a new assignment with Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland (ECONI). Poole will represent ECONI at public events and meetings with youth as well as create seminars to promote its message. "It is an attempt to invite evangelicals to consider biblical themes of reconciliation, peace, mediation, justice, and citizenship. What does it mean to be an authentic Christian in a sectarian setting?" he says.

Poole, himself, knows the answer to that question."The reason I'm going back is destiny. It is just simply being where God shows me."—*Tom Price*

'Top five': Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Kansas, and California

Mennonite, Brethren in Christ, Amish numbers up

Newton, Kan. (MWR)—The Mennonite, Brethren in Christ (BIC), and Amish population in the United States increased 3.4 percent last year, with much of the growth coming in the Old Order and conservative groups, according to a recent survey. The number of U.S. Mennonites and Amish, including those in Puerto Rico, totals 289,550, up from 280,027 in 1995.

The Old Order Amish, the second largest group in the United States, grew from 50,070 to 55,405 in 1995, a jump of 10.7 percent. Membership in the 11 Old Order Mennonite groups increased 9 percent to 12,845.

Largest gain. The statistics were compiled by Esther and Nelson Hostetter of Akron, Pa., to update their first census last year. Their work is the first attempt to count state-by-state the number of Mennonites and Amish in all groups—from mainstream to conservative.

Among mainstream groups, the Mennonite Brethren posted the largest gain, going from 18,551 to 20,499, a 10.5 percent increase, largely due to the addition of several Slavic and East Asian congregations in the past year. The Mennonite Brethren rank fourth in U.S. membership.

The Mennonite Church still remains the largest U.S. group with 83,028, down 330 members from last year's census. The General Conference Mennonite Church, the third largest group, lost 711 members and now stands at 26,203.

The top five states in Mennonite, BIC, and Amish population are: Pennsylvania, 85,126; Ohio, 38,008; Indiana, 28,601; Kansas, 21,983; and California, 12,455.

Washington state had the biggest increase of Mennonites and related groups at 78 percent, going from 1,392 to 2,467 with the emergence of Slavic Mennonite Brethren congregations. Arkansas grew 19 percent, from 558 to 676, primarily among the Old Order and conservative groups, while Massachusetts grew 15 percent, from 209 to 258 members. Virginia recorded an 11 percent increase, from 8,940 to 9,823.

The United States is home to 48 Mennonite, BIC, and Amish groups, the same number as last year, in 3,329 congregations and districts, up four from last year. Four states do not have any organized presence: Nevada, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Utah.

—*Rich Preheim*

Keeping the main thing 'the main thing':

MCC executives approve guidelines for spending

Winnipeg, Man. (MCC)—The major agenda item at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) executive committee meeting here June 20-21 was a question of priority: how large a portion of the program dollar should be spent overseas?

"MCC has always been committed to spending most of the money overseas. We still are," Ray Brubacher, director of overseas services, told the committee. "But in recent years, we have increasingly emphasized—at the request of overseas partners—education, exchange, and advocacy in North America." Workers return from field assignments carrying a message from church and community leaders overseas, said Brubacher: "Do more to affect change in North America. That is where many of our problems begin." Workers also want North American Christians to learn to know overseas partners, so MCC on occasion brings church leaders from overseas to share the challenges and joys Christians face in their nations.

The proposal, presented by Berry Friesen, director of MCC administration and resources, specified that 75 percent of the total cash income to MCC must be spent for overseas country programs rather than for program in Canada and the United States.

The executive committee endorsed this guideline and commended staff for their willingness to accept its discipline.

This decision establishes the current ratio as a benchmark, since now MCC spends 75 percent of the total cash income overseas.

"Nearly all of the money spent in North America is integral to the work done overseas," observed John A. Lapp, retiring executive secretary. "Nevertheless, we want to keep 'the main thing the main thing.' "

The executive committee expressed no discomfort with MCC's administrative overhead costs. Those remain in the 9-12 percent range, where they have remained steady in recent years.

—Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker

Mennonite migrations. *Geneva, Switzerland (MCC)*—Frieda Letkeman, 76 years old, relaxes in her cottage-like house in the town of Lower Chortitza, Ukraine, speaking to her visitors in a unique, inseparable flow of Old German and Russian vocabulary. Because Letkeman was married to a Russian, she was among the few people of Mennonite heritage in the Ukraine who were not forcibly moved to Siberia during Stalin's era. Most of those who were banished to Siberia some 50 years ago have since migrated to Germany.

Unlike Letkeman who was not displaced, many people have become refugees. The problem continues today in the Commonwealth of Independent States, with some 9 million people on the move.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) currently has five workers in Russia and one in the Ukraine, as well as two in Germany who work with Siberian Mennonite emigres. Now that Mennonite emigration from Siberia has slowed to a trickle and after years of resettlement assistance, MCC is increasingly turning its attention to victims of ethnic and political violence—many of whom are displaced—within the former Soviet Union.—*Tim Wichert*

'The bread of life' has taken on new meaning for some residents of Pottstown, Pa., thanks to Hopewell Mennonite Church of Pottstown. Every week the congregation distributes to local families between $200-$600 worth of products that are donated by a local grocery store and bakery. Volunteers from the church meet every Monday morning to separate and bag the breads, fruits, vegetables, and desserts. They then load the bags and boxes into their own vehicles and take them to elderly and low-income residents of the community.

—Nancy Lloyd in Atlantic Coast Currents

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How do you get rid of 400 beds, mattresses, desks, and dressers? That's the question that faced Eastern Mennonite University staff when they bought new furnishings a year ago for a newly constructed student residence and renovated dorm—and had lots of leftover furniture. Many of the still-usable furnishings went to nonprofit agencies like the Community Services Board, Harrisonburg, Va., who gave them to needy families in which children were sleeping on the floor. Other furniture went to church-owned camps, Habitat for Humanity in West Virginia for use by staff and flood victims, and the Salvation Army.

—Eastern Mennonite University

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Fifteen youth and sponsors from Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., spent a week in July conducting a Vacation Bible School in Jamaica. They recreated a Jewish marketplace in which children became members of Jewish households, made crafts, and watched live drama at the Mandeville Brethren Assembly in Mandeville, Jamaica. The church is the home congregation of Art McFarlane, one of the youth group sponsors. The team prepared for the project by working with Waterford's own Marketplace Bible School in early June.—*Patricia McFarlane*

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Biking against bombs was the mission of some 97 bicyclists and volunteers who participated in a July 6-7 cyclathon in Manitoba to raise money for the Mennonite Central Committee bomb removal project in Laos. The event raised $31,000 (Cdn.)—three times more than expected.

About 25 people from the Laotian community in Winnipeg joined the effort and shared their stories during a Sunday morning service. "We are Laotian—you are Western," said Bounnhong Thongvankham in the service. "And you are helping our small country so far away from Canada. . . . This is very important to us. The world should know there are unexploded bombs hidden under the ground on Laos land."

—Gladys Terichow

- **Metzler dies.** A. J. Abram Metzler, former publishing agent and manager of Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa., died on July 28 in Goshen, Ind. Metzler, 93, worked as publishing agent from 1935 to 1960 and served as executive secretary of the Mennonite General Conference, 1963-1974. He served as pastor of numerous churches and was a founding member of the Mennonite Camping Association.

- **Scholarships awarded.** Janel Lehman, a student at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Tonya D. Goertzen, a student at Bethel College, Newton, Kan., were awarded $500 scholarships from the Mennonite Nurses Association (MNA) for the 1996-97 school year. MNA awards two scholarships each year to students at Mennonite colleges who are in their final year of the nursing major.

- **New degree established.** The board of trustees of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., took action to establish a graduate program in pastoral counseling, contingent on approval by the Mennonite Board of Education. At the July 15-16 meeting, the board also authorized the administration to continue plans for a new wellness and athletic facility to be presented to the board at the November meeting.

- **Youth gather.** Almost 250 junior high youth from Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa Mennonite churches gathered for "Know Jesus '96" at Goshen (Ind.) College on Aug. 2-4. The participants took part in seminars, athletic tournaments, and service projects. The weekend was sponsored by Camp Friedenswald and Amigo Centre.

- **Bergey remembered.** The family of Linda Brubaker Bergey, a Mennonite Board of Missions worker who died last fall from a rare form of cancer, has contributed a computer terminal in her memory. Bergey's husband, Roy, and daughters, Lisa and Krista, and her parents, Dean and Vivian Brubaker, joined MBM staff for a memorial service on June 19. The computer is used to produce prayer ministry, mission education, and communication materials.

- **New appointments:**

Jeffrey A. Ambrose, director of business affairs, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pa.

David Tadlock, assistant professor of music, Goshen (Ind.) College.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Bob Buck was licensed as youth pastor at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Elverson, Pa., on July 28.

Kevin Clark was ordained on June 9 as pastor of Big Springs Mennonite Church, Rileyville, Va.

Lee Ebersole will be ordained on Sept. 8 as associate pastor of Ridgeway Mennonite Church.

Paul Kratz was reappointed to a three-year term as overseer in the Central District of Virginia Mennonite Conference, beginning on Sept. 1.

Wendy Miller was ordained on Aug. 9 as campus minister at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Mayra Pagán was licensed on Aug. 10 for Hispanic ministry at Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Samuel Pagán was ordained on Aug. 10 as associate pastor for Hispanic outreach at Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Arland Schrock was appointed interim overseer for the Mountain Valley District of the Virginia Mennonite Conference beginning on Sept. 1.

Samuel Weaver was appointed overseer for the Massanutten Cluster of the Potomac District of the Virginia Mennonite Conference beginning on Sept. 1.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Dennette Alwine and Todd Friesen returned to the United States from Beijing on Aug. 5 for a year of home leave. Their address is 942-G Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Cathleen Benoit, Hull, Mass., began a Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) Voluntary Service term in Richmond, Va.

Cassandra Byler, Slatington, Pa., began an MBM Voluntary Service term in Harlingen, Texas.

Olga Cantarero, Harlingen, Texas, began an MBM Voluntary Service term in Harlingen.

Nathan Daniels, Elida, Ohio, began an MBM Voluntary Service program in Tucson, Ariz.

Jeff Heie, Washington, D.C., began an MBM Voluntary Service term in Washington, D.C.

Safer than before. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Sako Komchore Torre tends a camel in Kenya's arid northeast. In the early 1990s, drought, an influx of Somali refugees, and ongoing disputes over land increased violence in the area.

In the town of Wajir, a charismatic young woman named Dekha Ibrahim organized residents to form the Wajir Peace and Development group. Determined to break a cycle of violence that threatened her life and the lives of her children, Ibrahim began talking to other women at the Wajir market who agreed they were tired of living in fear. They eventually convinced the men, youth, and elders of the village of their cause and organized themselves into the Wajir Peace and Development Group. Among other activities, the group organized a rapid-response team that travels to trouble spots to help resolve disagreements. Today Wajir is more peaceful than it has been in 20 years.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) contributed $17,000 to the Wajir Peace and Development Group over the past two years. MCC workers Hadley and Janice Jenner support Kenyans like Ibrahim who are working to prevent their country from slipping into the chaos that has destroyed neighboring countries like Somalia, Sudan, and Rwanda. "By many people's standards, Dekha Ibrahim is not important," says Janice Jenner. "She is young, a woman, and a Somali. In Kenya, that's three strikes against her; however, she didn't let that stop her." —*Pearl Sensenig*

Karen Hertzler, Harrisonburg, Va., began an MBM Voluntary Service term in Washington, D.C.

David Moyer, Akron, Pa., began an MBM Voluntary Service position San Antonio, Texas.

Julianne Stutzman, Mertztown, Pa., began an MBM Voluntary Service term in La Jara, Colo.

Kellie Talbot, Wichita, Kan., began an MBM Voluntary Service term in La Jara, Colo.

• **Coming events:**

21st annual retreat for persons with disabilities and their families, Brethren Retreat Center, Shipshewana, Ind., Sept. 13-15. The theme of "Care Giving" centers on issues like co-dependency, conflict, and the needs of family members, Sunday school teachers, and health care professionals. Sponsored by the Mennonite Disabilities Committee. More information from 219 533-9720.

50th anniversary celebration, Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa., Oct. 6. The day-long event begins at 9:30 am.

Mysteries of Grace and Judgment, an evening of stories about Mennonite experience in Russia, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 11. Features storyteller Jack Dueck and singers George and Esther Wiebe. Tickets are available from 800 313-6226.

Basic institute in conflict management and mediation, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College, Jan. 27-31, 1997. Faculty for the sessions are Dalton Reimer and Ron Claassen, co-directors of the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies. More information is available from 800 909-8677.

• **New books:**

An Introduction to Old Order and Conservative Mennonite Groups by Stephen E. Scott explores the history and faith of these two lesser-known groups of Mennonites. Includes anecdotal stories and photographs. Available from Good Books, 717 768-7171.

Summerville Days is the second book in the Whispering Brook series by Carrie Bender. A young Amish girl's summer adventures. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

• **New resources:**

Folktales of Peace is a 22-minute video for children that features stories from West African, Native American, and Appalachian cultures. Discussion questions included. Available on free-loan basis from local Mennonite Central Committee offices or for purchase from MCC at 717 859-1151.

No Hands But Ours, a 13-minute video, shows volunteers at Mennonite Central Committee material resource centers in the United States and Canada preparing items to send to MCC partners worldwide. Includes interviews with people who received material assistance in Bosnia and the Ukraine, as well as Rwandan refugees in Zaire. Available on free-loan basis from local MCC offices or for purchase from MCC at 717 859-1151.

Together We Can is an 8-minute video about the Mennonite Central Committee mobile meat canner. Shows volunteers at work as well as the people who receive the final product. Available on free-loan basis from local MCC offices or for purchase from MCC at 717 859-1151.

• **Job openings:**

Associate chaplain, Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa. Begins July 1, 1997. Contact human resources department at 717 581-3936.

Maintenance director, Menno Haven Camp and Retreat Center, Tiskilwa, Ill. Qualifications include experience in advanced carpentry and electrical, plumbing, masonry, vehicle, and grounds maintenance. Full-time salaried position with housing and benefits. Employment opportunities for spouse. Fax résumé to the camp at 815 646-4301.

Program manager, Menno Haven Camp and Retreat Center, Tiskilwa, Ill. Qualifications include experience in adult, youth, adventure initiative, and high ropes programming. Full-time salaried position with employment opportunities for spouse. Fax résumé to the camp at 815 646-4301.

Unit leader, Service Adventure program, Albany, Ore. Responsibilities include living in unit household of 5-6 young adults, providing spiritual nurture, counsel, administration, and guidance in life skills. Two-year term. Open for single person or couple. More information from Kent Dutchersmith, Mennonite Board of Missions, 219 294-7523.

NEW MEMBERS

Alden, N.Y.: Gene Lowery, Freida Lowery, Peggy Kipfer, Robert Huston, Teresa Huston, and Edward Bayer.

Bahia Vista, Sarasota, Fla.: Clyde Schwartz, and Barry and Sue Loop.

Clinton Brick, Goshen, Ind.: Mary Honderich.

East Union, Kalona, Iowa: Steven Rhodes, Randy Miller, Aaron Schrock, Allison Miller, and Shawna Yoder.

Fort Collins, Colo.: Brian and Lynn Campbell, Jeff and Kay Miller, and Lori Strauss.

Grace, Berlin, Ohio: William A. Hershberger, Lisa Miller, Linda Yoder, and Marion Yoder.

Hawkesville, Ont.: Dana Alexander.

Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: Karen Smucker Shelly, Bill Beck, Sherry Beck, Sonja Beck, and Brenna Beck.

Howard-Miami, Kokomo, Ind.: Floyd Sneary, Barbara Sneary, Keith Miller, Julia Birky, Carlyle Schlabach, Brock Birky, Janet Brant, Lyle Burkholder, Beth Otto, and Dan Otto.

Line Lexington, Pa.: Jonathan Saint.

Maple Grove, Belleville, Pa.: Rosie Peachey.

Mennonite Church of the Servant, Wichita, Kan.: Susanna Barrett Mierau.

North Clinton, Wauseon, Ohio: Cindy Allan, Meagan Beck, Shannon Blosser, Katie Eicher, Shaun Gugel, Angela Richer, and Emma Richer.

Plains, Hatfield, Pa.: Sue Brunk.

Smithville, Ohio: Rolland Villard, Ross Landis, Vesta Landis, Michael Ross, Dawn Ross, Larry Stutzman, and Lisa Stutzman.

Washington Community Fellowship, Washington, D.C.: Amy Bilyeau, Angela Collier, and Byron and Kristin List.

Zion, Broadway, Va.: Charles Clark, Lindsay Clark, and Anna Dintaman.

BIRTHS

André, Trish Painter and Nate, Wauseon, Ohio, Ross Christopher (third child), January 13.

Byler, Juanita Plank and Steve, Belleville, Pa., Austin Ray (first child), July 13.

Coil, Lynette Troyer and David, Millersburg, Ohio, Brennan Alexander (second child), July 17.

Conklin, Thelma Gochnauer and Michael, Exton, Pa., Michael Thomas Jr. (first child), July 11.

Darling, Patti Bowman and Robert, Pueblo, Colo., Golda Alicia (first child), July 18.

Diestel, Priscilla Obazele-Williamson and Eckhart, Indianapolis, Ind., Jan Johan Boaz (second child), July 25.

Donovan, Jill and Richard, Carrsville, Va., Emma Grace (first child), July 12.

Eby-Good, Carol and Michael, Lancaster, Pa., Paul Jonathan (first child), June 6.

Gerber, Gail Graves and Randy, Goshen, Ind., Nicholas Ryan (first child), July 18.

Gerig, Karen Wilson and Nathan, Lebanon, Ore., Tanner Cole (third child), July 11.

Gifford, Lavonne Cassel and Frank, Telford, Pa., Alyssa Taylor (second child), July 19.

Gray, Beata and David, Columbus, Ohio, Tennison Geier (second child), June 4.

Hershberger, Jane Yoder and Delwyn, Kalona, Iowa, Michael Lynn (second child), July 19.

Higer, Karen Steenblock and Scott, Nampa, Idaho, Keith Howard (second child), June 13.

Hood, Amy King and Michael, Adamstown, Pa., Megan Nicole (first child), July 1.

Hoover, Mim Miller and Mike, Millersburg, Ind., Andrew Benjamin (second child), July 19.

Horner, Stephanie Haines and Carl, Wakarusa, Ind., Lydia Ariel (fourth child), July 17.

Hunsberger, Barb Kane and Bryan, Schwenksville, Pa., Michael Tyler (second child), born July 12, received for adoption July 22.

Jans, Lori Steiner and Brian, Union, Ohio, Erin Steiner (first child), July 23.

Johnson-Evers, Connie Johnson and Steve Evers, Goshen, Ind., Kyle Steven (second child), June 3.

Jones, Barb Leichty and Ron, Middlebury, Ind., Spencer Clay (third child), June 6.

Kauffman, Dawn Stutzman and Ronald, Wauseon, Ohio, Joshua Marc (second child), May 31.

King, Crystal Lehman and A.J., Princess Anne, Md., (twins) Graham Seiber and Michael Rhodes (third and fourth children), July 8.

Lehman, Suzanne Smucker and Jim, Grove City, Ohio, Rebecca Mae (second child), May 1.

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Lockwood, Diane Miller and Dustin, Goshen, Ind., Demi Jean (second child), July 28.

Lund, Carole Anderson and Eric, Telford, Pa., Nathaniel James (second child), July 27.

Martin, Andrea Peifer and Bryan L., Ephrata, Pa., Joshua Peifer (first child), July 21.

McFarren, Betty Stauffer and Lance, Ligonier, Ind., Riley Stuart (first child), July 18.

Metzler, Nancy Jenkins and Brian, Birmingham, Ala., Eliza Margaret (second child), July 26.

Miller, Marla Gascho and Eric, Wauseon, Ohio, Shelby Lynn (firstchild), Aug. 1.

Moore, Melanie Hartman and David, Keams Canyon, Ariz., Hope Danielle (third child), July 1.

Peachey, Debra Rothrock and Kent, Belleville, Pa., Megan Elizabeth (third child), June 21.

Quiring, Yolanda Kroeker and Ken, Elkhart, Ind., Alison Sara (second child), July 21.

Ryan, Sara and Jeff, Columbus, Ohio, Jacob (second child), Dec. 4, 1995.

Schrock, Clara and Matthew, Columbus, Ohio, Victoria Grace (fourth child), June 18.

Shipe, Brenda and Jeffrey, Milroy, Pa., Ivybeth Cecile (fourth child), July 16.

Spicher, Gina Hartzler and Keith, Belleville, Pa., Meredith Leigh (third child), July 22.

Stutzman, Martha Gault and Kurt, Holmesville, Ohio, Adam Alexander (third child), July 19.

Sundberg, Colleen Widrick and Eugene, Beaver Falls, N.Y., Matthew James (second child), July 29.

Zimmerman, Marie Francois and Chuck, Blue Ball, Pa., Fabienne Marie (first child), July 12.

Zimmerman, Amy Redmond and Donovan, Lititz, Pa., Kelci Leigh (first child), July 9.

MARRIAGES

Addicott-Brown: Rodney Addicott Jr., Sharpsville, Pa. (Christian Missionary Alliance), and Janelle Brown, Spartansburg, Pa. (Valley View), April 6, by Arland Miller, grandfather of the bride.

Allgyer-Groff: Melvin Allgyer, Womelsdorf, Pa. (Myerstown), and Dorothy Groff, Paradise, Pa. (Kinzer), July 20, by Paul L. Clark.

Amstutz-Lantz: Carlene Amstutz, Broadway, Va. (Beldor), and Stephen Lantz, Broadway, Va. (Zion), July 27, by Richard K. Early.

Becker-Miller: Deanne Becker, Canton, Kan. (Hesston Inter-Mennonite Fellowship), and Dannie Miller, Sarasota, Fla. (Bethel), July 27, by Duane Yoder.

Bontrager-Huffman: Kimberly Bontrager, Middlebury, Ind. (Clinton Frame), and Roger Huffman, Fortville, Ind., July 27, by Terry Diener and Robert Shreiner.

Colistro-McCormick: Anna Colistro, Pueblo, Colo. (Pueblo), and Robert McCormick, Pueblo, Colo. (Pueblo), July 6, by Dave Foncannon.

Duvendack-Nofziger: Tadd Duvendack, Everett, Wash. (Archbold Evangelical Mennonite), and Kristine Nofziger, Pettisville, Ohio (North Clinton), June 15, by Gary Blosser.

Egli-Mast: John Egli, LaGrange, Ind. (Marion), and Stacey Mast, Millersburg, Ohio (Martins Creek), July 20, by Carl L. Wiebe.

Eubanks-Rich: Jeff Eubanks, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa (Sugar Creek), and Amy Rich, Wayland, Iowa, May 11.

Hagel-Kennel: Kathryn L. Hagel, Harleysville, Pa. (Blooming Glen), and Timothy Kennel, Souderton, Pa. (Blooming Glen), July 20, by Truman H. Brunk, Jr.

Hamsher-Zendt: Matthew Hamsher, Sugarcreek, Ohio (Walnut Creek), and Kristina Zendt, Staunton, Va. (Staunton), June 29, by Ross A.Miller.

Hockman-Wert: Cathleen Hockman, Eugene, Ore. (Eugene), and Dave Wert, Eugene, Ore., July 20, by Gayle Sheller.

Hofert-Schmidt: Nels Hofert, Williamsville, N.Y. (Metropolitan Chapel), and Naomi Schmidt, Alden, N.Y. (Alden), July 6, by James W. Andrews.

Holman-Kahl: Wendy Holman, Accident, Md. (Glade), and Andrew Kahl, Augusta, Ga., July 4.

Hostetler-Ross: Dawn Hostetler, Orrville, Ohio (Smithville), and Michael Ross, Kidron, Ohio (Smithville), June 29, by Richard Ross, grandfather of the groom, and Glenn Steiner.

Leary-Schmidt: Kevin Leary, Marilla, N.Y. (Baptist), and Juliana Schmidt, Cowlesville, N.Y. (Alden), May 25, by Titus Kauffman.

Leatherman-Nelson: Judy Leatherman, Philadelphia, Pa. (Germantown), and Mark Nelson, Neward, Del. (Germantown), June 15, by Marianne Mellinger.

Litwiler-Wyse: Jeff Litwiler, Hopedale, Ill. (Hopedale), and Christina Wyse, Wauseon, Ohio (North Clinton), June 29, by Gary Blosser.

Lutz-Moyer: Douglas E. Lutz, Bowling Green, Ohio (Lutheran), and Cheramie Moyer, Findlay, Ohio (Blooming Glen), July 27, by Truman H. Brunk and Barbara Moyer Lehman.

Miller-Yoder: Anita Miller, Goshen, Ind. (Clinton Frame), and Randi Yoder, Goshen, Ind. (Clinton Frame), July 21, by Robert L. Shreiner.

Moyer-Nase: Rachel E. Moyer, Souderton, Pa. (Blooming Glen), and Chad E. Nase, Telford, Pa. (Blooming Glen), July 26, by David A. Stevens.

Mullins-Yoder: Sara Mullins, Jackson, Mich. (Methodist), and Robby Yoder, Goshen Ind. (Clinton Frame), July 20, by Rod Matthews.

Showalter-Snader: Timothy Showalter, Broadway, Va. (Zion), and Christina Snader, Harrisonburg, Va. (Concord), July 20, by Richard K. Early.

Showalter-Terpack: Brent Showalter, Pittsburgh, Pa. (Pittsburgh), and Krista Terpack, Pittsburgh, Pa. (Pittsburgh), July 13, by John Stahl-Wert.

DEATHS

Allebach, Stella K., 98, Souderton, Pa. Born: Oct. 7, 1897, Silverdale, Pa., to William and Emma Kratz Fulmer. Died: July 16, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—children: Kenneth F., Lloyd F., Claude F., Darwin F.; 14 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Norman F. Allebach (husband). Funeral: July 20, Souderton Mennonite Home, by Gerald Clemmer and David Greiser. Burial: Souderton Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Deumling, Dieter, 52, Rickreall, Ore. Born: July 17, 1944, Eberswald, Germany. Died: July 27, 1996, Rickreall, Ore., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Sarah Snyder Deumling, children: Reuben, Katherine, Benjamin, Jacob; sister and brothers: Angelika, Christoph, Hans. Funeral: July 30, Western Mennonite Church, by David Stutzman. Burial: Bethel Cemetery.

Freyenberger, Lavina Mae Graber, 88, Wayland, Iowa. Born: Jan. 25, 1908, Wayland Iowa, to John C. and Josephine Roth Graber. Died: July 18, 1996, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Survivors—children: Ardith Brunk, Phyllis Hartzler, Marcia Roth, Nedra Sauder; sisters and brother: Leah Eichelberger, Evalyn Graber, Stella Boshart, Alvin Graber; 12 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ezra J. Freyenberger (husband). Funeral and burial: July 20, Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, by Roger Farmer and Ruben Chupp.

Hooley, Ruth P. Brenneman Earnest, 79, Nampa, Idaho. Born: June 21, 1917, Kalona, Iowa, to Joseph and Alice Swartzendruber Brenneman. Died: June 26, 1996, Nampa, Idaho. Survivors—husband: Harold Hooley; children: Philip Earnest, Leland Earnest, Everett Earnest, Galen Earnest, Alice Hostetler, Vonnie Oxnam; sisters and brother: Mildred Hochstetler, Mary Ellen Brenneman, Eliza Ross, Maynard Brenneman; 17 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren, 11 step-grandchildren, 21 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Norman E. Earnest (first husband). Funeral: June 29, Nampa First Mennonite Church, by Duane Oesch and Robert Garber. Burial: Hillcrest Cemetery.

Long, Clayton W., 84, Souderton, Pa. Born: November 11, 1911, Salfordville, Pa., to George and Hannah Weber Long. Died: July 11, 1996, Hilltown Twp., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Laura Smith Long; children: Janice Morris, Jay L., Donald C.; brother: Wilmer W. Long; 8 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: July 14, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by David A. Stevens.

Metzler, A. J. (Abram), 93, Goshen, Ind. Born: Dec. 4, 1902, Martinsburg, Pa., to Abram and Catharine Kreider Metzler. Died: July 28, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Alta Maust Metzler; children: Dorothy Brunk, Alice Roth, Joyce Hostetler, Edgar, Carl, Jay; 19 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Aug. 1, Waterford Mennonite Church, by Lloyd L. Miller. Burial: Prairie Street Cemetery.

He served as publishing agent and manager of the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa., from 1935 to 1960 and as executive secretary of the Mennonite General Conference, 1963-74.

Schweitzer, Betty Jean, 69, Milford, Neb. Born: April 16, 1927, Milford, Neb., to Harvey and Sarah Alice Beckler Schweitzer. Died: July 24, 1996, Milford, Neb., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Cleve Schweitzer; children: Harvey, Leslie, Mirvin, Shelia Rist, Nora Troyer; sister and brothers: Berndetta Oldfield, Merle, Robert; 11 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. Funeral and burial: July 27, East Fairview Mennonite Church, by William J. Saltzman and Lloyd Gingerich.

Schlabach, Abe J., 70, Phoenix, Ariz. Born: Aug. 24, 1925, Yoder, Kan., to Joseph J. and Suzanne Yoder Schlabach. Died: July 8, 1996, Phoenix, Ariz. Survivors—wife: Lelia Esch Schlabach; daughter: Gretchen Krehbiel; sisters and brother: Martha Kauffman, Elizabeth Raber, Monroe; 1 grandchild. Predeceased by: John A. Schlabach (son). Funeral: July 11, Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, by Dennis Stauffer and Mike Stutzman. Burial: Resthaven Cemetery.

Yoder, Berniece Elizabeth Miller, 79, LaGrange, Ind. Born: July 20, 1916, Shipshewana, Ind., to John S. and Nora Elizabeth Sunthimer Miller. Died: July 12, 1996, LaGrange, Ind., of pancreatic cancer. Survivors—husband: Orva M. Yoder; children: Carolyn Mae Troyer, June Elaine Kennell, Retha Darlene Kreitzman; brothers and sisters: Truman, Orvan, Mervin, Beulah Neff, Ruby Weaver, Vera Bontrager; 4 grandchildren, 2 stepgrandchildren. Funeral and burial: July 16, Shore Mennonite Church, by Richard Martin and Jerry Rodman.

Correction: In the July 23 *Gospel Herald*, Verna E. Hostetter Denlinger's place of death was listed as Gap, Pa. It should have been Chambersburg, Pa.

A key change. *Goshen, Ind. (GC)*—Retiring Goshen (Ind.) College president Victor Stoltzfus (right) recently made things official by handing over the keys to the presidential house to interim president Henry D. Weaver (left). Myrl Nofziger, chair of the board of overseers, presides over the key exchange. Weaver will serve as interim president for six months before president-elect Shirley H. Showalter begins in January 1997.

In discussing his future plans, Stoltzfus nixed two popular options. "I'm not golfing because I don't know how to golf," he says. "And I'm not going fishing because I find that boring." He plans instead to do some landscaping, unpack about a thousand books, learn Windows 95, and spend time with children and grandchildren during at least a six-month "hibernation" before considering future possibilities.

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This business of pretending

It's no secret that Mennonite General Assembly in Orlando, Fla., next summer, won't be the only destination for a lot of Mennonites. Many will make a pilgrimage to Disney World for at least a day. Some adults will go eagerly, others merely to pacify children. Either way, dollars from Mennonites will help to make Disney the multibillion dollar industry that it is.

The Disney empire makes a business out of pretending. The web of entertainment products, resorts, and theme parks is built on the premise that people are happy—and therefore will pay money—when they are pretending.

Why are we so enamored with Disney and other such theme parks and entertainment venues? Perhaps it's because we are all reluctant to leave the comforting make-believe world of childhood. Parks and movies and resorts make adults think they're actually back in the days of their imaginative prime.

But pretending that needs to be propped up by expensive vacations and box office hits can lead to escapism. And that leads us right away from the God who inhabits the concrete world of fuschia blooms and storm clouds—as well as people on welfare and prison inmates.

Disney is just one company cashing in on a wider national phenomenon and one from which North American Mennonites are hardly immune. That is, we live many of our days in a "pretend world"—a luxury for those of us with full bellies and bulging mutual funds. Inherent in this business of pretending is forgetting the violence and poverty that are bundled into newspapers and hurled onto our front steps each morning.

The logic of the pretend world is similar to the reasoning some Georgia officials used in Atlanta before the Olympic Games. Fulton County bought homeless people in the city one-way tickets out of town and had them sign papers promising not to return. (See story in August 7 issue of *Gospel Herald.*) The idea was, of course, to make it possible for tourists to stroll down streets swept clean of those who make pretending impossible.

"Out of sight, out of mind," is the logic of our make-believe. So we buy tickets for homeless people just to get them out of Atlanta—and out of our imaginations. We think that maybe if we refuse to talk about poverty, divorce, and homosexuality, they will simply go away. When we get the poor, the abused, and the victims of war off the streets of our minds, we think, maybe then we can play our games with abandon and buy T-shirts and taffy and clear consciences until our suitcases are full.

The language of the pretend world serves primarily to cushion us from reality. Euphemisms replace candor in this language. Slaughtered civilians become "collateral damage"; discrimination against the homeless becomes "Project Homeward Bound."

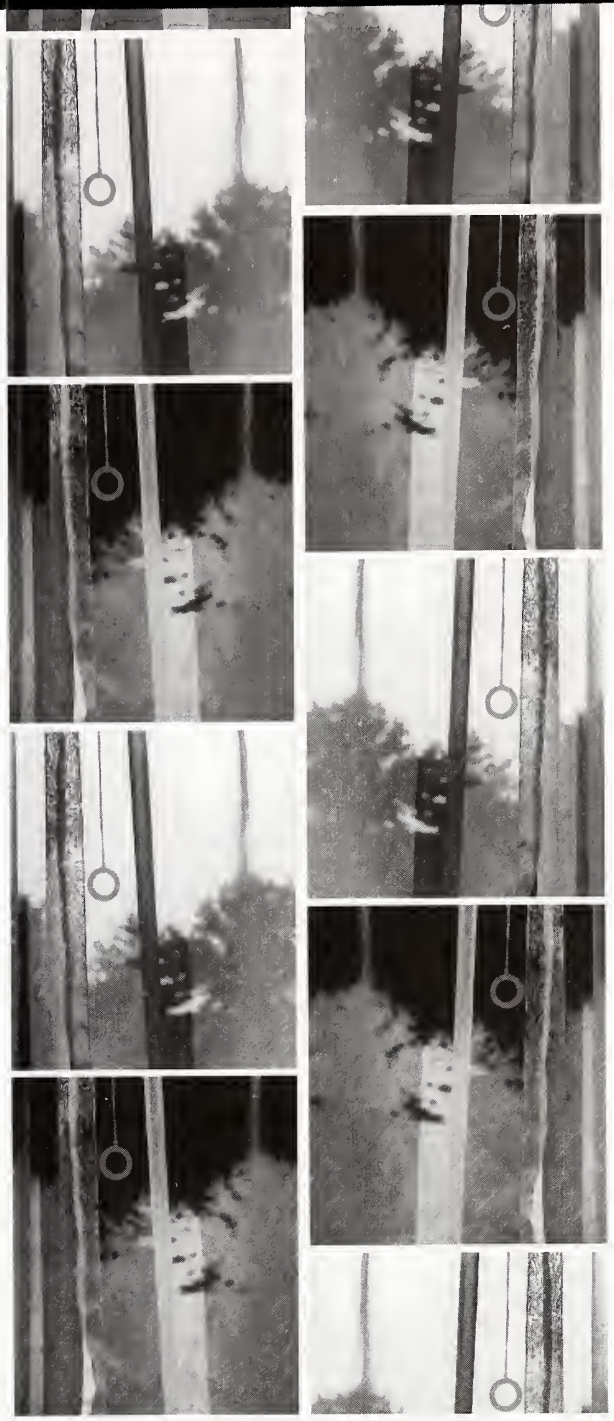
Certain words don't appear in the vocabulary of the make-believe. The spell check on my computer doesn't recognize either "homelessness" or "ethnocentrism" as words. I'm sure there are reasons these aren't there, but the fact that they aren't reminds me that I would rather not have them in my head either.

Jesus assures us that certain words—and certain people—won't ever be lost from the human vocabulary, even if we don't put them in our computers or allow them on our streets. "You always have the poor with you," he says (John 12:8).

You always have the poor with you. At the very center of our make-believe worlds, our carefully orchestrated businesses, and our homeless-free streets, the poor are with us. The poor in spirit, the poor in pocket, the poor in body—they are with us. And we can't buy them one-way tickets forever.

If indeed our nation uses primarily the logic and language of make-believe, then the church must respond with the logic and language of its Creator. When the church hears the logic of wealth and decadence, it must answer with the reasoning of responsible living and spontaneous generosity. When the church hears the language of euphemisms and avoidance, it must reply with honest, forthright words.

Maybe the church can help us leave our Disneys of comfortable forgetting and sterile sentences. Maybe the church can help us live fully in a groaning world that is being redeemed beyond anything we could pretend.—*vsw*



In the next eight issues of Gospel Herald, *24 Mennonite leaders tell of their vision for possible directions for the church going into the twenty-first century.*

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August 27, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

My vision for the Mennonite church (1):

The place to begin is with the Spirit of Jesus

Where should the Mennonite church be headed in the next 10 years? How will it meet these goals? A new series examines how it is we get to where we want to go.

by Vernon Rempel

In Luke's Gospel, the scene is this. Not for the last time, Peter, John, and James are trying hard to stay awake on a hill while Jesus prays. Suddenly Jesus is transfigured, and the somnolent disciples glimpse his glory along with the figures of Moses and Elijah. The still-sleepy Peter, struggling to rise to the occasion, suggests that they put up three booths to honor the dazzling figures on the hill. But a voice from the heavens overwhelms this idea saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Luke 9:35).

My vision for the Mennonite church is this: that we become less a church of booth-making and more a church intent on listening to the Spirit of Jesus Christ. I pray that our booth-making will be overwhelmed by the heavenly words, "Listen to him!"

We may be sleepy like Peter. The deep sleep of sin can numb us and make us slow. While we are in our spiritual stupor, we experience the dazzling of the Spirit. We are kissed by the lips of God, and we struggle to waken. And like

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

A tribute to Alicia Showalter Reynolds:
God was there with her when no one else could be 6

Iowa-Nebraska raises $21,000 in 'peaceful' conference session 9

Mennonite workers in Haiti intervene in mob violence 10

"My prayer for the Mennonite church is that we recognize that it is the Spirit of Christ who defines the church. This will temper all our dialogue and our debate."

Peter in his sleepy struggle, we want to put up booths—booths for the Spirit of Christ!

We erect the booth of doctrine. Mennonites have not been a very creedal church. But that impulse lives among us: to define church by right doctrine. Candidates for congregational membership and candidates for ministry can be asked to pass muster on a variety of belief questions. "Will you go with Kraus or Brunk for Christology?" "Is the Bible our conversation partner or our law book?" In the doctrinal booth, everything rises and falls with this sort of question.

We erect the booth of ethics. How we live has always been critical to Mennonites. This can easily become the basis for defining church. "Homosexuals: are you for 'em or agin' 'em?" "Are you a member of the U.S. Marines?" In the ethical booth, these questions define who is in or out of church.

We erect the booth of church structural politics. Mennonites have been articulate about the abuse of power in the life of the church. We have stressed servant leadership and washed each other's feet. But there is a Mennonite sensibility among us that says, "The majority voted on it, so we have to go with it. You may disagree, but you need to submit, at least until the majority changes its mind." Whether the majority says "yes" to integration or "no" to female leadership, in the structural politics booth, votes and majorities define the ins and outs of church.

Are not all these questions very important? They sure seem to be. Should they not be the churchly basis for including or excluding people? Perhaps. But out on the hill, putting up our booths, just when we have the poles erected and the stakes hammered in, an overwhelming voice may come from heaven: "Listen to him."

My prayer for the Mennonite church is that we recognize that it is the Spirit of Christ who defines the church. All doctrine, all ethics, all structural politics are relative to and flow out of this person who loves us and calls us by name. Doctrine, ethics, and structural politics are works of human hands. Useful tools they may be, but that is all they are. They only properly exist in service to the Spirit.

This recognition of the defining Spirit will temper all our dialogue and debate. Not everything rises or falls on the structure of the Trinity. Questions of sexuality are not ultimate. Votes may be decisive for our day, but are not holy writ.

As we write and define, as we include and exclude, as we decide corporate questions, my prayer for our future is that all will be done with a deep sense of the presence of the Spirit of Christ. May all that we do be leavened with a growing awareness that there is one who dwells in us, between us, and among us who is never fully domiciled in the churchly booths we erect. This Holy Spirit is the true name and center for the church.

Vernon Rempel has served as pastor of Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, Pa., since 1986. He will be moving to First Menno-Church of Denver, Colo., next month.

by Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus

I envision a Mennonite church where we experience all that our Lord Jesus had and *has* in mind about his Spirit dwelling in his believers. I envision the preaching, teaching, and personal feeding on God's Word that opens the way for this to be a reality in our lives.

Before his death, Jesus tried to prepare his disciples for his physical absence and spiritual presence. Of the Holy Spirit he said, "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:17-18).

Before he was taken up into heaven, Jesus said to the apostles, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). I envision this applying to us, "You shall be my witnesses in your hometown, in your state or province, your country, and to the ends of the earth."

I envision clear teaching that, at the time of baptism, applicants receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in a series of three events as at Pentecost. After Peter's message about Jesus Christ—the central theme for any preacher—he said to the troubled, seeking people, "*(1)* Repent, *(2)* and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven; *(3)* and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

In Eph. 3:16, Paul says, "I pray that out of his glorious riches [God] may strengthen you

with power through his Spirit in your inner being." Whatever the circumstance, there is the power of the Spirit and a strength that can be felt.

I grew up on a fruit farm and remember my father calling early in the morning from the bottom of the stairs for us children to get out to pick peaches. Sometimes he sang a made-up tune to the words, "As soon as you can see the peaches on the tree."

As long as we are under the Holy Spirit's control, wonderful fruit is produced in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22-26).

The Holy Spirit dwells not only in individual believers but in the body of believers. Paul said, "In him [Christ] you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). What potential for belonging, worship, and witness!

I envision the time when consideration of persons for public ministry will be based on the question, "What gifts has the Spirit given?" and not, "Which gender is eligible?"

On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17) Peter declared the message of the prophet Joel of old, "I will pour out my Spirit on everyone. Your sons and your daughters will proclaim my message." I envision our Mennonite church being as up-to-date as Old and New Testament times when God used men and women as leaders; up-to-date on the authority of Jesus, the custom-breaker, who after his resurrection said to women when their word meant almost nothing, "Do not be afraid. Go and take word to my brothers" (Matt. 28:10).

Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus is a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and an ordained Mennonite minister who lives in Harrisonburg, Va.

Last year the Mennonite Church—along with our partner, the General Conference Mennonite Church—made three important decisions: to merge the two groups, to adopt a new confession of faith, and to follow a new vision statement called "Vision: Healing and Hope."

All of these—merger, a new confession of faith, and a new vision statement—set the direction for the new church in broad strokes. However, it is only as each of us make these new directions concrete in our own lives and in the lives of our congregations that the true direction of the Mennonite church will take shape for the future.

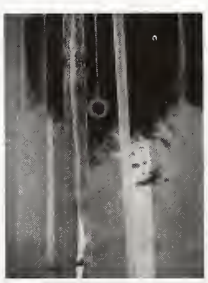
How should we do that? Gospel Herald *put that question to 41 current GC and MC leaders. Twenty-four of them responded with short essays giving specific ideas on where or how the Mennonite church should head into the future. We've combined these into a new series which will appear in these pages for the next eight weeks.*

Your response is welcome, both to the ideas presented in the series, or your vision for the church for the next 10 years. Please keep your responses short—no more than 150-200 words. They will appear in future issues in "Readers Say."

Send them to "My Vision," Gospel Herald, *616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683.*

E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com

—Editor



by J. Max Zook

I love weddings. Of all my pastoral tasks, I like performing weddings the most. My favorite part is the processional. It is the most rehearsed, best-dressed, and usually the most perfectly performed of all the religious ceremonies I experience. From my usual vantage point on the platform, the highlight of the processional for me is when the bride first becomes visible at the back of the church before she walks down the aisle. It is at this point that the groom, who is usually waiting in my line of vision at the front of the church, and I can clearly see the bride. I am privileged to witness that special exchange between them when the groom first sees the bride, the culmination of months of preparation, weeks of frantic activity, and hours of nervous waiting.

I see the faithful Mennonite church of the future as a bride, eagerly preparing for the moment when the heavenly Bridegroom will come for the wedding. I envision the church being so helplessly in love with the Lover that all affections, energies, priorities, and acts of service spring from this love. Like lovers focused on each other, I envision the church having a single, pure, and directed passion, that of pleasing the One who first loved the church.

This vision assumes that the Mennonite

"My vision for the church is that we will rediscover and fiercely maintain a central heart of spiritual devotion to Jesus Christ above all programs and projects."

Church will rediscover and fiercely maintain a central heart of spiritual devotion to Jesus Christ. Many excellent programs, projects, and proposals surge through the church today, but only one central focus is sufficient to serve as a standard against which all others are evaluated. In all the agendas of today we are in desperate danger of being distracted from the essence of what defines us as God's people: our love for and relationship with Jesus Christ.

What will such a church be like? Worship services will be living encounters of expectant love between the bride and the Groom. The Word of God will be treasured, respected, and obeyed, for it is a letter from the Lover to the beloved. Lavish acts of generosity will be commonplace as the beloved seeks creative ways to demonstrate the full extent of this love.

The church will look everywhere to find recipients of love gifts, realizing that as one gives to the poor and needy, one is really giving to the Lover. The church will delight in telling everyone about its love life, upcoming wedding, and, unless restrained, will not be content until the whole world is invited to the celebration. Such a church will be characterized by a bubbling life, a spontaneous love, and a contagious excitement as it approaches the moment of glory, the wedding supper of the lamb!

J. Max Zook is pastor of the Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa., and moderator-elect of the Conservative Mennonite Conference.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."
—Romans 12:2, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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Thank you for the series, "How My God Met Me." I have found the articles inspirational and helpful.

It's also interesting to me that your periodical is of interest to my 80-year-old parents as well as to my 18-year-old daughters—and all ages in between. *Gospel Herald* is picked up very quickly when it arrives at our house, and it is read by a significant number in this family.

Thank you for your faithful ministry to the church. Thank you for presenting a variety of issues, articles, and stories.

Miriam H. King
Hickory, N.C.

Thanks for the article, ***Whose Name Do We Claim?*** (June 18) by Mark R. Wenger. As a church planter for the last 10 years, I would affirm that exalting the name of Jesus Christ above that of a denomination is the most effective way to build God's kingdom.

While there are many good reasons to be part of a group of churches who work together in common mission, I would agree that it is detrimental to the larger body of Christ when we emphasize and highlight our differences. This often implies that the "others" are less than they should be and we have the inside track on God's revelation.

I pastor a church comprised of many Christians from either no church background or from a variety of religious and denominational backgrounds. I am sometimes asked if I teach Anabaptist principles and beliefs and how they are received by those from non-Mennonite backgrounds. The answer I give is that I teach biblical principles. Obviously, my Anabaptist background and training affect my perspective and understanding of the Scriptures. But I've discovered that spiritually hungry people have their lives changed when Jesus Christ is exalted and his truth is taught.

The principles of a certain religious movement never bring genuine, long-term change. As Wenger said so well, our key identification should be that we are followers of Jesus Christ, and building bridges with all other disciples of Jesus must be a major focus of our efforts.

Our congregation has been richly blessed by cooperative outreach efforts and fellowship with churches of many other backgrounds through a community food pantry, a home for unwed pregnant teenagers, Young Life, Emmaus, Kairos prison ministry, Promise Keepers, and chaplaincy programs in the hospital and police department. When we concentrate on building God's kingdom without concern for who gets the credit or what label we put on it, God keeps giving the increase.

Dennis Gingerich
Cape Coral, Fla.

As a 45-year-old woman recently ordained to ministry after a lengthy personal and congregational process, I identify with many of Elaine Maust's feelings and experiences in ***She Said 'Yes'! She Said 'Yes'!*** (July 23).

I loved the image of God in heaven dancing for joy when Elaine Maust said "yes" to ministry. I imagine God now, waiting to dance and shout again, waiting for the day when Gulf States Mennonite Conference can recognize God's call to ministry in the life of a woman. That day I believe God will once more dance for joy and holler, "They said 'yes'! They said 'yes'!"

Sylvia Shirk Charles
Goshen, Ind.

When a person's name is attached to pieces that can't help but bring a chuckle—***The Top 10 Mennonite Bumper Stickers*** (July 23) is another in Ryan Ahlgrim's delightful spoofs—that person risks being cast as one with a tongue permanently planted in a cheek.

So is Ahlgrim serious in favoring "two denominations along national lines" ("Readers Say," same issue)? He suggests a "simple" solution to the integration dilemma, but has he thought through the implications of that solution?

Has he figured out, for example, which of the two denominations will inherit each of the joint institutions: missions, seminaries, publishing, etc.? Or does he assume that since the headquarters of virtually all of the Mennonite institutions are currently south of the 49th parallel, they will naturally stay there, and the "Canadian" denomination will pioneer a fresh slate, easily dissociating itself from long-standing loyalties? That could be one version of simplicity.

Canadians and Americans sometimes tend to make different assumptions about such things—and are quite surprised to discover an alternative view.

Now there's a new challenge for Ahlgrim: "The top 10 differences in American and Canadian perspectives." It could be a lot of fun—and enlightening. But probably not simple.

Ferne Burkhardt
Petersburg, Ont.

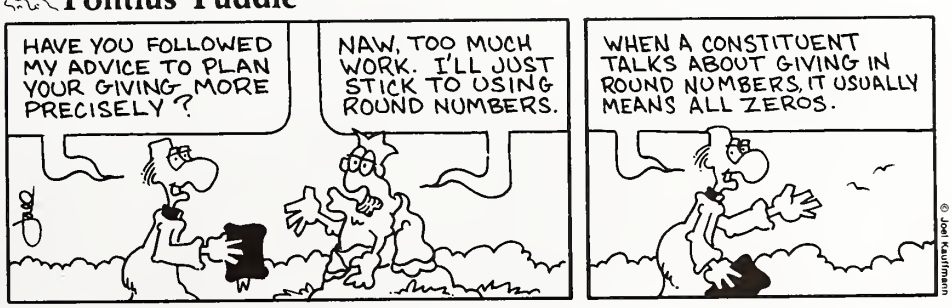
When We Win the Lottery (July 30). Mennonites in the past lived simply, like Jesus and Menno Simons. Today materialism, worldliness, and greed are evident. Jesus spoke out against these. "Woe to you who are rich," he said in Luke 6:24.

Perhaps we need to be more like Mennonites in the past, who would read Scripture on a topic, then meditate and pray about what they had read. On most topics, such as wealth, the Scriptures are quite plain.

The first few chapters of Acts show the church as Jesus taught it should be. The apostles and disciples gave up everything to proclaim the good news. I believe we would certainly see revival blessings if we lived that way today.

Wayne Kratzer
Elyria, Ohio

Pontius' Puddle



A tribute to Alicia Showalter Reynolds:

God was there with her when

We fight evil by loving each other

by Shirley Hershey Showalter

There is a bell on the roof of the house in which I grew up in Pennsylvania. It is as old as the house itself, built around 1740. My father told me the bell was used in colonial times to summon the neighbors only in the case of a fire or dire emergency. It could not be rung just for fun. Hence, I was never allowed to toll that bell.

Today, however, I am going to toll that bell with your help. We are going to grasp the rope together and say to all who can hear: we grieve, we are bereft, we have been betrayed. There is a searing fire burning in our house. We ring the bell for Alicia, named by her father because he liked the sound of that name in Bolivia. The name means truth. Today I wish to speak truth as those who loved Alicia have told it to me.

These are the reasons we are bereft. We know now, finally, what we had feared for 66 days. We know Alicia will never again come bounding across a room and catapult into the arms of her eager young husband, Mark. Nor will she go to Africa with him as they had dreamed—he as a dentist and she as a research scientist personally administering to children the vaccine she had helped to perfect in the laboratory. She will never win the Nobel Prize, either in peace or in medicine, even though she has friends who thought her capable of such achievement. Alicia will never again ride her bike or take a walk along Summit Avenue—and, just as sadly, never will her children, because she will never be the mother she had wanted to be.

We are desolated by our many losses, not only of wife, daughter, and sister but also granddaughter, niece, cousin, student, friend, and colleague. Wherein can we find consolation?

One source of comfort comes from memory. Everyone who met Alicia felt her beauty—especially since she fell in love with Mark. Here are the oft-repeated adjectives—radiant, vibrant, luminous, and vital. That fateful day she left Baltimore to go to Charlottesville, she was so vivid to her husband that he could tell the police about every article of clothing she was wearing, down to the sizes and name brands.

But true beauty, Alicia's kind, is more than skin-deep. She had beauty of character also. She had an unusual combination of compassion, sensitivity, and calm on the one hand, and an intensely competitive, determined pursuit of excellence on the other. These qualities permeated all her activities and relationships—from sports to friendship to marriage to research. She did not complain, blame others for her troubles, or judge their decisions. Alicia always assumed that if something were wrong, there was a way to fix it. And she never gave up.

In her scientific work she had setbacks at first, being unable to

For 66 days this spring, many of us in the Mennonite church held our collective breath and prayed with the family of Alicia Showalter Reynolds, Baltimore, Md., as we waited for word about her.

Alicia was abducted from her automobile on March 2, 1996, near Culpeper, Va., as she traveled to meet her mother. Her body was found nearby on May 7, victim of a homicide.

While our questions about Alicia's whereabouts were answered, their place was taken with other serious and troubling questions: How powerful is evil? Where was God? Why do bad things happen to good people?

We also learned about fear—in ourselves and in others. From all over came reports of new fears about traveling alone, particularly by young women, even in relatively "safe" areas like Culpeper. Media reports also had people in this area arming themselves with weapons against the perpetrator, who to date has not been apprehended.

These questions and issues were addressed in a direct yet simple way by several of those who participated in the memorial service for Alicia Showalter Reynolds. It was held May 12, 1996, at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., the congregation in which Alicia had been baptized and where she and her husband, Mark, had been married 15 months before her death.

Here *Gospel Herald* presents excerpts from several of the eulogies and meditations given at this memorial service. Not only are these a tribute to one who many of us knew—if only third- or fourth-hand—but they may also help us toward better answers to our questions about evil, suffering, violence, and death. —*Editor*

no one else could be

Alicia Showalter Reynolds in a 1994 photo.

duplicate the work of a previous researcher. But she didn't waste any energy on blame or anger; she kept on working, assuming that all she needed to do was dissect the problem a little more carefully. The day she died, Alicia was very close to seeing the successful conclusion to her experiment. Her colleagues in the John Hopkins laboratory were able to confirm that the new DNA-based method of producing the vaccine for schistosomiasis substantially improves the level of protection.

Alicia wanted to make her mark on the world, and she wanted to love and be loved. It was a delicate balance, a magnificent adventure she and Mark had embarked upon together. We were just getting it right, he said. We were getting very good at it.

The memories are an important part of our consolation, but they are not the most important source. This community in Harrisonburg, Va., and the others represented in Alicia's life—in Sugarcreek, Ohio; Goshen, Ind.; and North Baltimore, Md.—are Mennonite faith communities. We are a people who have suffered together in our long history and who are called to bear one another's burdens. Alicia's parents, Harley and Sadie Showalter, can testify that their community has been deep, and it has also been broad—going beyond the Mennonites to many other people of faith.

Alicia was a follower of Jesus. She was a peacemaker, a generous giver, and a truthteller whose accomplishments never made her arrogant or prudish or judgmental. Alicia would testify today that the God who knit her together in her mother's womb, who called her by name, and who willingly came into the world in order to suffer with us—that God walked through the deep water with her.

She is safe, she has graduated. She understands what we cannot—that God is love, God

(continued on page 8)

Have you forsaken us?

by Ed Stoltzfus

Almighty God, we have a bitter complaint to lay before you.
We are terrified to do this because, as God, you are beyond all created things, and we are frail creatures of this earth.
But Jesus taught us to pray to you honestly and directly; and in this event of Alicia's death, we must raise our complaint.
We simply do not understand why Alicia was caught in such vicious and violent evil. If you are a good and loving God, and your sovereignty touches the affairs of creation and history, where were you in this tragedy?
Did you plan it? If so, how can we call you loving and good?
If you did not, did you allow it? If so, why?
This is our complaint.

Ah, Lord God, even as we complain we remember Jesus, the one in whom we believe, even in our ignorance and weakness.
We remember that evil killed Jesus, that he too felt abandoned. He too cried out, "My God, my God. . . ."
So don't blame us if we cry, even now, "Our God, have you forsaken us?"
We also believe you raised Jesus to resurrection life, that violent evil does not have the last word.
We know that in Jesus you too suffer with us and we too suffer with you—and in an inexplicable way in and through suffering, evil is being conquered. Even death is overcome.
So while we bitterly complain about Alicia's death, we believe in your life and peace for us.

Healer of our every ill
light of each tomorrow
give us peace beyond our fear
and hope beyond our sorrow.

—A memorial prayer by Ed Stoltzfus, interim pastor at Park View Mennonite Church.

(continued from page 7)

is good, and God is all-powerful even in the face of the grossest injustice and evil. This central Christian paradox, which we must struggle with and can never solve to our satisfaction, she can now comprehend.

And even though we do not deny the pain and anger we feel and even though Alicia cannot be replaced in our hearts and minds, we can choose to construct some meaning out of a death that is otherwise totally meaningless. The only meaning she would want us to make is meaning based on the two central pillars of her life: love and excellence.

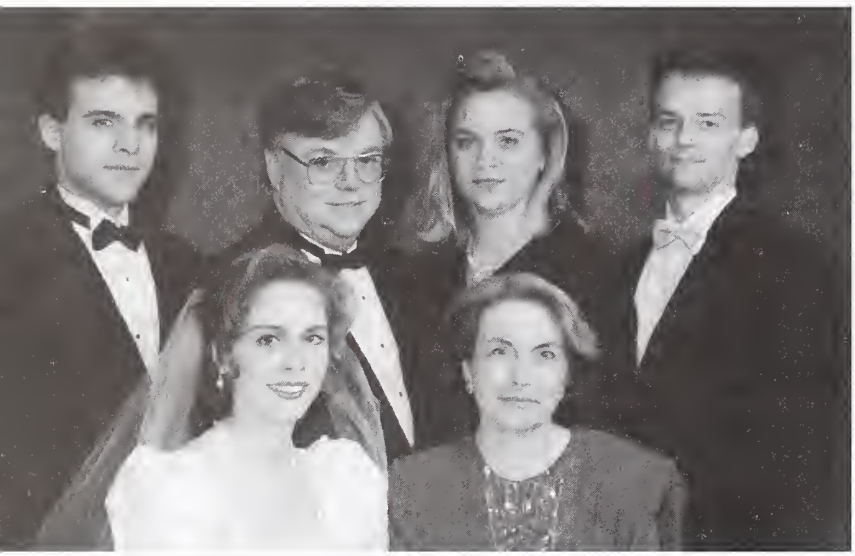
There is one thing which we must speak against, however. We have read in the news that because of this case, many people are buying guns. Alicia would not want that; her family does not want that. We believe in another way. We believe that the way to fight violence is to drop weapons and hold hands.

There is power in love that is stronger than all the weapons in the world. It is a power made possible by Jesus who died a hideous death but then was resurrected from the grave. Death has been overcome by life eternal. And evil will eventually be destroyed by good. The grave does not have the victory; God does.

We should not passively accept evil. We must name it and fight it, not with weapons and not by barricading ourselves behind locked doors and barbed wire. We fight evil by loving each other and educating each other and even more by building relationships across boundaries that separate us in our communities. If we are going to honor Alicia in a country too full of violence, we have much work yet to do.

The bell is tolling. It tolls for Alicia Showalter Reynolds. And it tolls for us.

Adapted from a eulogy for Alicia given by her aunt, Shirley Hershey Showalter, at her memorial service.



The Showalter family at Alicia's wedding in December 1994 (seated front): Alicia and her mother Sadie; (standing) twin brother Patrick, father Harley, sister Barbara, husband Mark.

Tecum domine

by Shirley Yoder Brubaker

Can death separate us from God?

The apostle Paul's words at the end of Romans 8 are comforting. Paul lists everything he can think of that people thought might have the power to wrench a Christian from God's love. These are supernatural and natural things which might exercise power over us: death and life, angels and demons, powers and principalities. Paul concludes, and therefore we must also conclude, that there is no power—and that includes evil—that can separate us from God's love.

What assurance and comfort that is for us. The brutal assault on Alicia does not mean that God abandoned her. Suffering and affliction are not God's last word, as raising his own Son Jesus Christ from the grave has demonstrated.

This is our hope—and it is a hope Alicia took with her to her death: that God was there with her when no one else could be. She was not alone. God had not abandoned her because she had never abandoned God.

Yes, evil exists. No one knows that better now than those of us who are left. Yet evil does not speak the final word; God's care for his own does.

Sixteen and a half months ago, I ended the meditation at Mark and Alicia's wedding by referring to an old novel, whose title was a Latin question: *Quo Vadis?*—"Where are you going?"

"Where are you going, Mark and Alicia?" I asked. And then I answered, "You don't know. You have no idea where life will take you. But if you go with God, that is all you need to know."

Now you know, Mark, where life took you. I will never forget your anguished cry to me the first time I saw you after Alicia was taken: "But it was to be for a lifetime!" It was. Ironically, it was—a lifetime shorter than any of us wanted or expected.

Quo Vadis? I answer now, as I did then, with another Latin phrase: *Tecum domine.* "With you, dear Lord."

With you. In our extremity. With you, dear Lord. With you.

Excerpted from the meditation at Alicia's memorial service by Shirley Yoder Brubaker, pastor of Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Iowa-Nebraska delegates put words into action; raise $21,000 for missions at 'peaceful' session

Milford, Neb.—When the 76th annual session of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference of the Mennonite Church met here Aug. 16-17, more than 200 delegates and guests not only listened. They also acted.

"Peace and evangelism must go hand in hand," Ann and Paul Gingrich, Elkhart, Ind., told capacity audiences at the Bellwood Mennonite Church in several addresses on the conference theme, "Proclaiming the Peace of Christ." The Gingrichs are currently serving as "peace evangelists" for the Mennonite Church.

Members of Iowa-Nebraska Conference responded by contributing $21,000 at a missions banquet on Friday evening. A first for this conference, the money goes toward a 1996-97 budget of $204,900—the largest ever adopted by the conference.

This budget includes $10,000 for "projected ministries." The conference's mission board reported it hopes to begin new work in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and establish a partnership with Mennonite Board of Missions for work in Ecuador.

Iowa-Nebraska delegates also had favorable words to say about integration with their counterparts in the General Conference Mennonite Church. Noting that Iowa-Nebraska Conference is spread over six states and relates to three GC districts, some delegates expressed willingness to divide their conference if necessary to help the merger process.

Structural models. Delegates agreed they needed models for how integration might happen in Iowa-Nebraska and authorized an ad hoc committee on integration to work on these models.

The conference heard that many of their churches are experiencing leadership changes—"above normal" changes, according to conference minister Noah Kolb.

John King, chair of the leadership board, challenged churches to look within for new leaders. "Congregations can only search for pastors outside with integrity if they also send leaders to other congregations," King said.

Iowa-Nebraska delegates agreed to a plan from moderator Phil Shenk to establish a communication network between conference and congregations. They also authorized work on a history of the conference—though they were a bit chagrined to discover a similar action 15 years earlier had never been implemented.

Joining the Gingrichs in speaking on peace and missions at four worship services were James and Jeanette Krabill, Elkhart, Ind., who recently returned as MBM workers in Côte d'Ivoire.

"The Bible is 'shot through' with peace language," James Krabill said. "But we have defined 'peace' and 'evangelism' so narrowly and allowed ourselves to cluster around one word or the other."

Peace is the core. Krabill continued: "Why is it that some churches are called 'peace churches'? That's incongruous with what you read in the Bible. If we are a 'peace church,' does that mean no one else is? To be a part of the church is to be an ambassador for peace," Krabill said. "Peace is at the very core of what God is doing in our world."

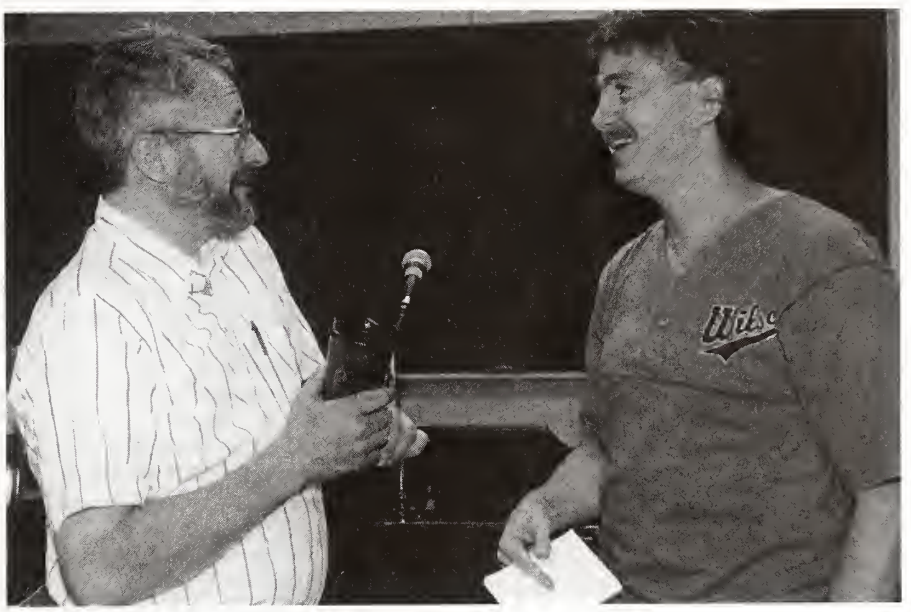
In the Saturday evening service, after hearing stories of peacemakers around the world, the audience responded to the call to be ambassadors for peace by gathering around a cross. The Krabills noted this is a customary way for West African Christians to recommit themselves to discipleship.

Peace was not only just addressed and listened to. It also permeated the conference sessions.

"We are feeling a sense of peace in this conference," a listening committee said in a summary statement. "Things are moving very smoothly in this conference."

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

The logo above right was developed by Cecil D. Kennel, Strang, Neb., for the 1996 Iowa-Nebraska Conference. "I wanted to show that the cross is at the heart of peace," Kennel told delegates.



'Go ye into all the world.' *Philadelphia, Pa. (EMM)*—Freeman Miller (left), bishop in Lancaster Mennonite Conference and professor at the Philadelphia (Pa.) campus of Messiah College, confers with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) worker to Djibouti, Mike Brislen. They spoke together during the World Mission Institute (WMI), held July 18-Aug. 2 in Philadelphia.

Miller helped the 24 WMI participants to reflect on their spiritual formation by talking about his own journey from a rural Amish community in Ohio to inner-city Philadelphia. Miller also spoke to the group about confronting a secular worldview. "We will need a plausible community of faith if we are to have any credibility," Miller said.

WMI, an annual training event, provides instruction for people entering cross-cultural Christian mission. It is sponsored by EMM; the John S. Coffman Center for Evangelism and Church Planting at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; and Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation.—*J. Allen Brubaker*

Mennonite Central Committee workers intervene in mob violence in Haiti

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers in Haiti recently intervened when they witnessed normally gentle people turn brutal in a crowd.

On Aug. 2, people in the neighborhood close to MCC Haiti codirector Dan Wiens' home in Port-au-Prince caught a man stealing a goat. He later admitted to belonging to a ring of petty thieves operating in the area.

Three-hour standoff. Wiens relates that by the time MCC workers Brent and Karen Hursey-McLaughlin and Philip and Terry Phibbs Witmer, who were in a nearby guest house, heard the commotion, a mob was dragging the thief along the road and hitting him with the broad sides of their machetes, stomping on his face with booted feet and burning him with lit cigarettes.

The two couples rushed to the scene where they saw the crowd tie the goat thief tightly to a telephone post in order to beat and stone him. Alarmed, they positioned themselves between the thief and the crowd.

A long and sometimes ugly three-hour stand-off ensued while two of the MCC workers tried to locate police. The police at the station refused to come, saying they were going off duty in a half hour, so the MCC workers went to pick up Wiens and MCC intern Paul Neufeld. While the four men tried to push back the crowd and break blows aimed at the captured man, Terry Phibbs Witmer and a Haitian friend set off again looking for police or a United Nations vehicle—any civil authority to intervene.

When officers arrived, they questioned some witnesses, handcuffed the accused thief, and took him away.

Haiti is still without law, despite Canadian and French governmental help in training the country's first civilian police force, says Wiens. In the absence of "law and order," people take matters into their own hands. After years of abuse and repression by police, who in the past were run by the military, Haitians have no trust for civil authorities, Wiens explains.

Working at the peace witness. The MCC workers are also pondering what some in the crowd told them—that they are outsiders who do not know Haitian ways and should therefore not intervene. Yet the workers say that they do not regret their actions. Instead, the MCC team is beginning to think about doing more work with Haitian churches "to bring out a stronger witness of Christian peace," Wiens says. Some Haitians in the crowd agreed with their actions, Wiens says, and even helped to the extent they could. Some mothers said they didn't want their children witnessing such brutality. Wiens recalls that one man urged the others to stop taunting and hitting the man, and another muscular Haitian man loosened the man's tied hands to ease some of his pain.—*Emily Will*

Strategy brings 2,000 percent increase in publishing

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM-COM)—In 1994, Editora Crista Unida (ECU), the Mennonite publishing house in Campinas, Brazil, brought in $4,000 in book sales. In 1996, it could sell as much as $800,000 in books.

A large part of the credit for this dramatic increase in sales results from the work and vision of David Falk, a mission worker appointed by the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Overseas Mission (COM).

For several years, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) and COM have worked jointly in programs in Brazil. The publishing house, now directed by Falk, was started and directed for a number of years by retired MBM worker Kenneth Schwartzentruber. Falk took over the publishing house when Schwartzentruber retired in 1993.

ECU, which originally started as a publisher of Anabaptist books for the Brazilian Mennonite Church-sponsored seminary in Campinas, had little need for tremendous sales. It met immediate needs and operated within budget.

But a ministry such as a publishing house needs to support itself to be as effective as possible, according to Falk.

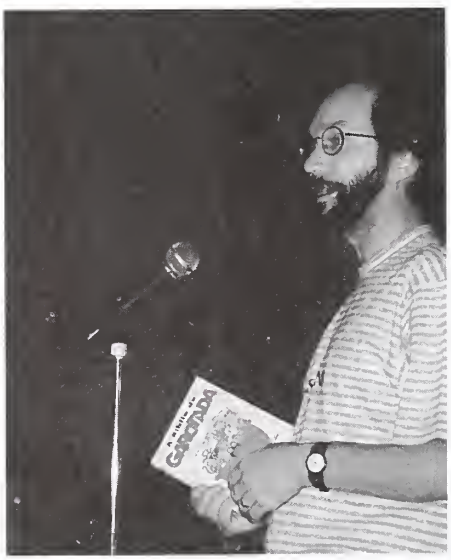
"This is the sort of ministry that can be self-supporting and not drain a church or agency, so we decided to move in that direction," Falk says. "So I went to several other publishers there, and the first thing they told me is, 'get a Bible.' "

Falk immediately began seeking the appropriate Bible for ECU to publish. He chose a children's Bible, which originally was published in North America as *The Preschooler's Bible*. He bought the rights, had it translated into Portuguese, and ordered 30 copies to be sent via airmail so he could begin to market it before his initial order of 10,000 books arrived in mid-January 1996.

Open doors. The difference ECU experienced was immediate. "The day the large shipment of 10,000 Bibles arrived, I already had 4,000 of them sold because of the 30 I had had sent to me earlier," Falk says.

In the last two weeks of January 1996, when the first shipment of Bibles arrived, Falk says that they sold $45,000 in books—as much as ECU sold in 1995.

Several doors to Anabaptist authors have been opened because of the children's Bible. He approached the managers of the Carrefour store chain in Brazil, which is similar to a Wal-Mart or Meijer store chain in North America. They bought the new Bible and have since picked up other ECU books because of successful sales of the Bible.



David Falk, publisher in Brazil

Today, if you walk into a Carrefour store, you will find books by Anabaptist writers John Driver and David Augsburger as well as the children's Bible next to translations of John Grisham's latest bestseller on the store shelf.

Falk expects to sell nearly 120,000 books by the end of 1996. Based on projections that every book sold passes through the hands of 2.6 people, he expects the books sold this year to impact 300,000 people.—*Christy Risser*

In the last days. *Hesston, Kan. (HC)*—Workers lay bricks at the south entrance of the Lemons Center, an addition to Charles Hall at Hesston (Kan.) College that will house Hesston's nursing program. The $725,000 construction and renovation project is nearing completion, and the Hesston College community planned to dedicate the facilities on Aug. 24. Charles and Diana Graber of Newton presented the dedication meditation entitled "To the Moon and Back, Please, and Thank You." Lemons Center, a 2,900-square-foot addition to Charles Hall, will house a 72-seat lecture hall, a student lounge, and offices for the college's nursing department. The facility is named in honor of Vira and the late Eugene Lemons of Albany, Ore.

Amid Olympic hype and hoopla:
Peace Factory provides alternative message

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Like most Atlantans, Jonathan Larson and Vernon Schertz eagerly awaited the beginning of the Olympic Games in their city.

But unlike some residents, they weren't thinking about how they could make a quick buck from the event.

Instead, the two Mennonites wanted to bring a message of peace to the athletes and spectators coming to Atlanta from all corners of the globe.

"I have a strong conviction that the church needs to be present in the marketplace," says Schertz. "We need to reach outside the walls of the church."

Their dreams became a reality when the Peace Factory was exhibited at the Trinity United Methodist Church, only seven blocks from Centennial Park, during the Olympic Games, July 21-Aug. 3.

Heightened impact. In addition to volunteers from Berea Mennonite Church and the Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, 45 people traveled from six states and one province to help with the Peace Factory.

The fact that these Olympic Games were heavily commercialized heightened the impact of the Peace Factory, says Larson. "It stood against all the marketing, hype, and hoopla," he says.

The Peace Factory did not have the expected number of visitors because the Olympic participants, for the most part, did not stray from the main thoroughfare. Over 500 people from countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and North America did participate in the hands-on exhibit, which was open from 10 a.m. to around 7 p.m. daily.

Jump in attendance. There was a jump in attendance during the second week of the Olympics, due to an increase in publicity about the Peace Factory and in response to the bomb that left two people dead in Centennial Park on July 27, says Larson.

"All of us felt anguish about what happened. But, at the same time, we felt it confirmed the need for the Peace Factory," he observes.

Malinda Berry, a Peace Factory volunteer, learned that her second cousin was married to the woman who was killed in the bombing. Still, she found a measure of hope in a service she attended the morning after the bombing. A number of the ministers who spoke urged the participants to be peacemakers.

Later, in the second week of the Olympics, there was a bomb threat at City Hall, and the employees had to be evacuated from the building. Berry, a graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College and a participant in the Ministry Inquiry program, noticed that a number of them were wearing buttons from the exhibit that read, "God's people make peace."

"It was rewarding to take a stand on the peace and social justice issues that have always been close to my heart," says Berry.—*Carla Reimer*

A Crow hymnal is in process, thanks to the efforts of Dave Graber, Hardin, Mont., a Mennonite worker among Native Americans. Graber, a public school music teacher, has been working on the project part-time since 1983. This past spring, a coalition of church leaders assemhled to oversee recording, writing, and documentation. Ahout 120 Crow hymns have been recorded. The songs blend the themes of the traditional Crow spirit journey with understandings of Jesus.

Graber earlier helped to produce a book of Cheyenne hymns. The hymn book, *Cheyenne Spiritual Songs,* was published in 1982 by Faith & Life Press.

Some 85 percent of the funding for the Crow project is still needed.

—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

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There was no room left in the inn when over 33,000 Promise Keepers came to Eugene, Ore., a city of 120,000. Months before the Aug. 2-3 rally of this evangelical men's ministry, the 3,000 or so hotel rooms in the Eugene and Springfield area were booked. Hundreds of local churches also hosted visitors. More than a dozen members of Iglesia Menonita Pentecostes in Woodburn, Ore., stayed in the Eugene Mennonite Church building.

Although a small rally by Promise Keeper standards, this was the largest conference ever held in Eugene.

—*Cathleen Hockman-Wert*

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A propeller was among the luggage that went along with twenty members of Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church who visited mission workers from their congregation, Max and Pauline Beachey and family, in Shell, Ecuador. The group took along various supplies and airplane parts—including the propeller—to the Beacheys, who work for Missionary Aviation Fellowship, during a 10-day service project in February. The work team put a roof on a cargo area, installed a phone system, painted, and performed electrical work and various other odd jobs.

—*Merle Stutzman*

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What better gift for a pastor than the pulpit? Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church recently gave Peter Wiebe the wood pulpit that he used during his years of ministry in the congregation from 1959-72.

Actually, Peter and his spouse Rheta Mae originally gave the pulpit to the congregation in memory of their son, Kenneth, who died in an automobile accident 29 years ago.

The Wiebes currently live in Glendale, Ariz., where Peter has served as pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church for the last twelve years.

—*Susan Miller Balzer*

Economic deterioration erodes the lives of Kanadier Mennonites

Winnipeg, Man. (MCC)—The picture Tony Enns painted for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) executive committee at their recent meeting was a grim one.

Many of the 50,000 Mennonites living in Mexico are eating their capital in order to survive. They are selling milk cows, breeding stock, land, and equipment. Their educational system has deteriorated; only a few children are literate and able to do simple arithmetic. The December 1994 devaluation of Mexico's peso, three years of drought, and the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement have contributed to this economic decline. Along with economic deterioration has come a deterioration of the moral and social conditions, said Enns.

Rejuvenating. "The crisis of the Kanadier Mennonites in Mexico is of grave concern, particularly to Canadian Mennonites," Enns told the committee. "The Mennonites in Mexico are their relatives, people with whom they communicate and visit, people for whom they desire well-being."

MCC Canada has worked in Mexico with Kanadier Mennonites in a formal way since 1977. "We want to help the colonies rejuvenate their vision and radiate positive Christian witness in Mexico," Enns says.

Currently three MCC couples serve in the colonies in Mexico. These six individuals focus their energies on improving the education available in the colonies, bolstering the colonies' economy, and strengthening relationships within the colonies and among the colonies as well as with MCC. For example, they lead evening classes in computer skills, management, English, and Spanish. They encourage the farmers to diversify their crops. Through the colonies, MCC offers emergency loans so farmers can buy materials and equipment.

Each year several hundred families living in Mennonite colonies in Mexico travel to Canada. Some come for seasonal jobs. Others say good-bye to friends and relatives and move to Canada. At least 35,000 Mennonites from Mexico are living in Canada.

Mexico is not the only place where MCC works with colony Mennonites. MCC has just agreed to a request from the colony Mennonites in Seminole, Tex., to find seven low-German speaking MCC volunteers to teach at their school. In Bolivia, five MCC volunteers and a volunteer from one of the colonies serve with the colony Mennonites.

This difficult work in Mexico and Bolivia is being done sensitively, observed Dave Cressman, executive committee member from Kitchener, Ont. In the past many Mennonite colony leaders saw MCC as a threat. They feared MCC would start a new church or steal their members. "We do not go into a colony in Bolivia, for example, until we are invited to be there," notes Abe Janzen, former MCC Bolivia country representative.

On the move. The colony Mennonites in Mexico are descendants of pioneers who moved to Canada from Russia in the 1870s. Before they moved to Canada, they negotiated special school privileges that allowed them to have their own private schools in the German language. They enjoyed this privilege until World War I, when the Manitoba and Saskatchewan governments made strong efforts to assimilate Mennonite children through compulsory attendance at public schools. As a result, Mennonites moved to Mexico between 1922-26, where they were promised freedom to educate their children in their own schools. The colony Mennonites in Bolivia have moved there from Mexico, Paraguay, and Canada.

—Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker

Mexican Mennonites and MCC help Tarahumara

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is joining with colony Mennonites in north central Mexico to assist the indigenous Tarahumara, neighbors to the colonists.

Both the colony Mennonites and the Tarahumara are suffering due to drought. But the Tarahumara have been hit especially hard. And because the colony's food stores are also low, they are not able to assist the Tarahumara as they have been doing. Thus the colonies have requested help from MCC.

In mountainous areas where the Tarahumara live, "the streams have dried up and many villages are looking for water," reports MCC administrator Bill Janzen. The Tarahumaras' goats and cattle are dying of starvation, and the people are becoming desperate. Bernhard Sawatzky, a colony Mennonite who has been visiting the Tarahumara weekly for many years, told MCC that the Tarahumara, an independent people, are themselves asking for outside assistance.

MCC will provide $4,500 (U.S.) to purchase beans and corn flour for tortillas for some 2,000-2,500 Tarahumara, particularly schoolchildren, living in villages in the mountains west of Cuauhtémoc, the city central to the colonies. This assistance will help alleviate hunger until crops are ready.

Colony Mennonites will purchase the beans and corn flour locally and deliver them to Tarahumaran schools. Any food not needed by the schools will be packaged and distributed to families in the surrounding areas.

Blinded by their shades. *Harrisonburg, Va. (MBM)*—Jordan Hamilton, Shannon Yoder, Adam Swartz, and Jana Strite (left to right), all of Harrisonburg, Va., mimic several mannequins in a music video, "Eye for an Eye." The video, produced by Jerry L. Holsopple for Mennonite Board of Missions, explores the statement by Martin Luther King, Jr., that "an eye for an eye leaves everyone blind." This segment will be one of five in a new video for children on peacemaking. It will be available in 1997.

- **CPT sends fall delegations.** Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) will send peacemaker delegations to Haiti, the Middle East, and Chiapas, Mexico, this fall. The Haiti trip is scheduled for Oct. 19-30, the Middle East trip for Nov. 1-12, and the Mexico trip for Nov. 9-26. More details about each delegation and information on participating in a CPT delegation is available from 312 455-1199.

- **Hesston welcomes faculty.** Seven new faculty members were recently appointed for the upcoming school year at Hesston (Kan.) College. They are: Jonathan Beachy, mathematics; Angela Frey, nursing clinicals coordinator; Luke Hartman, education, men's basketball coach, part-time admissions; Ann Minter, English, adviser for student newspaper; Steven Smith, communications and history; Faye Sprunger-Koop, psychology and history; and Scott Donald, piano instruction and music. Part-time instructors for 1996-97 were also named: Frank Brenneman, Karen Klassen Harder, Ritch Hochstetler, James Juhnke, and Brenda Martin Hurst.

- **Statement on violence drafted.** The Joint Committee on Violence, appointed by the General Boards of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church, is developing a statement on Christian responses to violence in North America. The statement is being prepared for consideration at the 1997 denominational meetings in Winnipeg, Man., and Orlando, Fla. The committee is asking GC and MC members to send stories of contemporary Mennonites who have responded with love and nonviolence to violent people and situations. Stories can be sent to Lois Barrett, PO Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

- ***Hymnal* update published.** The publishers of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* have produced a revision that includes updates and corrections. Most of the changes in this fifth printing appear in the indexes and footers and will not likely be noticed by users. The changes correct inaccuracies, add information that was not known in 1992, correct inconsistencies in style, and make the indexes easier to use. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* was published in 1992 by Brethren Press, Faith & Life Press, and Mennonite Publishing House. More than 160,000 copies have been sold.

- **Summer workers serve.** Over forty young people are participating in the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Summer Service Program this summer. African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Chinese, Colombians, Ethiopians, and people from various other backgrounds took part in an orientation June 11-15 and are now working with a church or service agency in their home communities for 10 weeks. They are serving in 13 states and Puerto Rico.

- **Ohio relief sale held.** The 31st annual Ohio Mennonite relief sale, held Aug. 5-6, brought in $208,000, comparable to last year's sales. Some 150 runners participated in the "Run for Relief," and over 400 volunteers helped with the sale.—*Celia Lehman*

- **Hesston board meets.** The Hesston (Kan.) College board of overseers reviewed the initial draft of a new institutional strategic plan, heard administrative reports, and re-elected officers in July 18-20 meetings in Milford, Neb. Director of development Elam Peachey reported on a record year for the college's annual fund. Contributions to the college's operating budget totaled $980,661.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Michael Dean was licensed and installed as pastor at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill., on July 14.

Karl McKinney was licensed and installed as pastor at Rogers Park Mennonite Church, Chicago, Ill, on Aug. 4.

Bonnie and Chuck Neufeld were installed as associate pastors at Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill., on July 7.

Phil Schrock was licensed and installed as pastor at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church on June 30.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Lynn and Mark Baker, with Julia and Christie, began a three-year term in Honduras in July with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and the Oregon Extension program of Houghton College.

Brenda and Rick Balmer, with Bethany, began a two-year EMM assignment in China on July 21.

Ellin and Glen Brubaker arrived in the United States on July 24 after 28 years with EMM in Tanzania. Their address is 1075 Gypsy Hill Road, Lancaster, PA 17602.

Renee Clymer of Lancaster, Pa., began a two-year assignment in Cameroon on July 20 with EMM and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

John Hertzler of Elverson, Pa., left for Honduras on July 31 after a two-month home leave. He is starting a three-year EMM term.

Jim and Lori Leaman, with Jordan, left for Kenya on July 31 after a one-year home leave. They are beginning a two-year term with EMM.

Rebecca Nicholl, Springfield, Ohio, left for Guatemala on July 15 for a one-year term with EMM.

Carolyn and John Rudy, with Solomon and David, left for Swaziland on July 23 after a three-month home leave. They are representatives with EMM and Mennonite Central Committee.

- **Coming events:**

Annual country day, Menno Haven, Inc., Chambersburg, Pa., Sept. 7. Events include children's activities, auction, tours, and blood pressure checks. More information available from 717 263-8545.

Biennial convention, Brethren / Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (BMC), Washington, D.C., Oct. 11-13. "Piecing Together New Patterns from Old Cloth" is the theme for BMC's 20th anniversary conference. More information is available from 612 305-0315.

Prayer summit, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, Oct. 25-26. Sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions Home Ministries. Wellington Boone of Promise Keepers is the featured speaker. More information is available from Danielle Kreider at 717 898-2251.

Annual convention, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Winnipeg, Man., Oct. 31-Nov. 3. "The Art of Business" is the theme. Laurie Beth Jones and Howard Brenneman are speakers, and operatic tenor Ben Heppner will perform. Activities include plenary sessions, workshops, tours, a poetry reading by David Waltner-Toews, and a panel discussion on supporting the arts. More information is available from 800 665-7026.

- **New resources:**

Catálogo CLARA includes Anabaptist materials in Spanish. Categories include evangelism, conflict resolution, theology, devotionals, church life, nonviolence, youth, and children. Available from Centro Latinoamericano de Recursos Anabautistas, Avenida (Calle) 32, No. 14-18 1er. Piso, A.A. 57-527, Bogotá 2, Colombia.

- **Job openings:**

Director of music, Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va. Responsibilities include coordinating worship music and choirs and meeting with worship committee. One-quarter-time position begins Oct. 1. Applications due Aug. 30. Contact Shirley Yoder Brubaker at 540 434-1604.

- **Change of address:**

Willis and Ina Ruth Breckbill, 1521 Kentfield Way #7, Goshen, IN 46526.

NEW MEMBERS

Deep Creek, Chesapeake, Va.: Son Chau, Bill Curles, and Minda Curles.

Huntington, Newport News, Va.: Jeff Hanbury and Jewellie Schaefer-Hanbury.

Michigan Avenue, Pigeon, Mich.: Colleen Fuller.

Oxford Circle, Philadelphia, Pa.: Aaron Wenger.

Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.: Tom Stauffer, Elaine Warfel Stauffer, and Miriam Stauffer.

Science Ridge, Sterling, Ill.: Cecil and Mary Nice.

Trinity, Glendale, Ariz.: George Burmeister, Jim and Kate Foster, Ethyel Moore, Leah Mullett Hershberger, Scott and Shannon Swartzentruber, and Russel Wildey.

BIRTHS

Benner, Nadine Miller and Keith, Plain City, Ohio, (twins) Kellie Marie and Katie Renee (second and third children), Aug. 6.

Bontrager, Deborah Sharp and Ken, Westbrookville, N.Y., Hadassah Ruth (third child), June 21.

Friesen Epp, Judith and Arlyn, Waterloo, Ont., Allegra Rheann (first child), July 19.

Gehman, Kim Robinson and Philip, Perkasie, Pa., Tanner Jesse (first child), July 24.
Haarer, Connie Nunemaker and Mark, Goshen, Ind., Jordon Shay (first child), July 28.
Hankins, Dawn Gerber and Scott, Charlevoix, Mich., Zachary Scott (second child), July 27.
Hochstetler, Libby Yoder and James, New Paris, Ind., Kathryn Grace (second child), July 17.
Jensen, Michelle Ropp and Keith, Sarasota, Fla., Joshua Aren (first child), July 14.
Leonard, Becky and Doug, Newport News, Va., Aaron Douglas (third child), July 23.
Moshier, Krystyna Zieniawa and Norman, Martinsburg, N.Y., Olivia Chanelle (first child), July 30.
Mosteller, Diane Shantz and Daniel D., Whitefish, Mont., Danae Ann (second child), June 30.
Nusire, Samira Garissey and Firas, Levittown, Pa., Theodore Abdullah (second child), April 4.
Puzycki, Janet Suderman and David, Stevensville, Mich., Joseph Charles (first child), Aug. 4.
Voth, Beth Anne Scobbie and Donley, Overland Park, Kan., Nicholas Reid (first child), June 8.
Wysong, Shannon Kulp and David, Elkhart, Ind., Dane Merritt (first child), July 14.
Yukich, Shirley Rhodes and John, Milan, Mich., Peter Allen (first child), July 29.
Zehr, Linda Anneler and Marvin, Carthage, N.Y., Jacob Anneler (second child), July 10.

MARRIAGES

Aschliman-Mignen: Kristen Aschliman, Archbold, Ohio (Zion), and Louie Mignen, Archbold, Ohio (Catholic), Aug. 10, by Randy Nafziger.
Bardell-Sequeira: Lisa Bardell, Albany, Ore. (Prince of Peace), and Carlos Sequeira, Portland, Ore. (New Song Church), April 27, by Jim Andrew.
Bennett-Schrock: Jeannette Bennett, Fort Wayne, Ind. (Emma), and James Schrock, Wolcottville, Ind. (Emma), Aug. 3, by John C. Murray.
Bontrager-Dermer: Troy Bontrager, Tempe, Ariz. (Trinity), and Robin Dermer, Tempe, Ariz. (Grace Community Church), June 1, by Jeff Meyer.
Dygert-Steria: Andrea Dygert and Jeremy Steria, Lowville, N.Y. (Lowville), Aug. 3, by Evan S. Zehr.
Frey-Stuckey: Margaret Frey, Goshen, Ind. (First), and Doug Stuckey, Goshen, Ind. (Lockport), July 27, by Ron Adams and Keith Leinbach.
Hess-Kennedy: Brian Hess, Harrisonburg, Va. (Lindale), and Erin Kennedy, Chambersburg, Pa. (Church of God), Aug. 3, by Earl Mills and James Leaman.
Roth-Wilson: Katina Roth, Wayland, Iowa (Sugar Creek), and Micheal Wilson, Wayland, Iowa, Aug. 3, by Ruben Chupp.
Stauffer-Wengerd: Lisa Stauffer, Union, Mich. (Bonneyville), and Isaac Wengerd, Elkhart, Ind. (Fellowship of Hope), Aug. 3, by Ken Livengood, Nina Lanctat, and Keith Kingsley.

DEATHS

Barnett, Billy James, 68, Gulfport, Miss. Born: Oct. 29, 1927, Lumberton, Miss. Died: July 27, 1996, Gulfport, Miss., of cancer. Survivors—children: Billy J., Bobby M., Charlotte Miller, Wanda Licona, Gail Odom; 5 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Mary Barnett (wife). Congregational membership: Gulfhaven Mennonite Church. Funeral: July 30, Riemann Funeral Home Chapel, by David Kniss. Burial: Coalville Cemetery.
Bechler, Luanna Weidman, 93, Pigeon, Mich. Born: Aug. 30, 1902, Pigeon, Mich., to Moses and Mary Ropp Weidman. Died: July 31, 1996, Bad Axe, Mich. Survivors—children: Robert, Roland, Clare, Pearl Menzel; 16 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: William Bechler (husband). Funeral and burial: Aug. 3, Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, by Jay Miller.
Becker, Esther C. Wiebe, 75, Albany, Ore. Born: Oct. 13, 1920, Newton, Kan., to Henry B. and Katie Entz Wiebe. Died: July 26, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—husband: Henry D. Becker; stepchildren: Paul, James, Mary McDonald, Elaine Page, Ruth Cripe; brothers and sister: Karl and Henry E. Wiebe, Elsie Epp; 14 stepgrandchildren. Memorial service: Aug. 1, Bethany Mennonite Church, by John Willems and Louis Lehman.
Brenneman, Uarda Sunshine Hills, 97, Albany, Ore. Born: Aug. 27, 1898, Franklin County, Iowa, to Franklin and Alvira Gates Hills. Died: July 20, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—children: Roderick, Harley, Vira Lemons, Barbara Burkey, Lois Miller; 20 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Harvey Brenneman (husband), Harvey (son), Margaret Cross (daughter). Funeral and burial: July 23, Fairview Mennonite Church, by Louis Lehman and Al Burkey.
Chanthakoun, Khamphanh Simmavanh, 74, Orrville, Ohio. Born: Oct. 8, 1921, Pakse, Laos, to Chanphome and Pheng Simmavanh. Died: July 18, 1996, Orrville, Ohio. Survivors—children: King Island Chanthakoun, Phet Inthaamnouy, Sirichant Inthaamnouy, Bouasy Louanglath, Viengkeo Souvannavong, Moukeo Ralston; brother: Done Simmavanh; 19 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Sithat Chanthakoun (husband). Congregational membership: Orrville Mennonite Church. Funeral: July 21, Auble Funeral Home, by John and Barbara Lehman. Burial: Martins Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Siberian summer. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Campers in Ivanovka, Siberia, reenact a Bible story. The major camp activity is full-fledged, energetic dramatization of Bible stories, carried out among Siberian birches. Mennonite Central Committee began providing monetary help to the camping ministry in 1994, when the Omsk-area Mennonite Brethren Church Conference could no longer finance it. This year the camping program serves 740 children, 60 percent of whom are non-Mennonite Russians. The children stay two or three days, spending much of their time acting out stories from Jesus' life.

Nikolai Dueckmann, conference executive of the small but active group of churches in western Siberia, developed the camping ministry several years ago. He and church members believe the church's future lies in its ability to relate to children. With the current chaotic economic climate of the former Soviet Union, the camp program relies heavily upon its volunteers' creativity and resourcefulness. The 24 established churches still see the ministry as very much their own, and MCC support is intended only to help sustain the churches' outreach. Each day a different congregation brings food, milk, and whatever supplies are needed. Church members use their vacation time to serve as camp volunteers. A sister-camp relationship has also been established with Camp Crossroads, a ministry of the Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Garber, Parke M., 78, Elizabethtown, Pa. Born: July 1, 1918, Elizabethtown, Pa., to Jacob and Lizzie Mumma Garber. Died: July 30, 1996, Marietta, Pa., of a heart attack and stroke. Survivors—children: Fred, Dale, Hazel Charles, Joyce Shultz, Faye Yoder, Grace Hollinger, Dawn Meck; foster daughter: Violet Knipe; sister: Pearl Longenecker; 25 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Mildred Miller Garber (wife). Funeral and burial: Aug. 2, Bossler Mennonite Church, by Enos Martin and Russel Baer.

Holst, Delton, 72, Petersburg, Ont. Born: June 21, 1924, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Jacob and Annie Holtzworth Holst. Died: July 28, 1996, Kitchener, Ont., of a stroke. Survivors—wife: Joanna Sauder Holst; children: Katherine Procter, Ann Louise Fretz, Marlene Letkeman-Holst; brothers and sisters: Harvey, Albert, George, Clarence, John, Irene, and Viola Holst, Luella Sauder; 10 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: July 31, Nith Valley Mennonite Church, by Harold Schilk.

Homes, Barbara M. Helmuth, 77, Goshen, Ind. Born: March 19, 1919, Miami County, Ind., to Menno S. and Suville Nisley Helmuth. Died: Aug. 2, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Elmer L. Homes; children: Marlene Shank, Debra Kay Krawiec, Sandra Birkey, Randy E.; 8 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Aug. 5, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, by Wes Bontreger, Clare Schumm, and Mahlon Miller.

Kaufman, Harry Edward, 105, Hesston, Kan. Born: Sept. 1, 1890, to Eli and Magdalena Steckley Kaufman. Died: July 26, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—children: Floyd, Glen, Howard, Erma Miller, Alta Graber, Fern Bontrager; 14 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, 9 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by Anna Boeckner (1st wife), Erna Schmidt (second wife). Funeral: July 31, Hesston Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, by Duane Yoder and Waldo Miller. Burial: East Lawn Cemetery.

King, Ida Mae, 89, West Liberty, Ohio. Born: June 19, 1907, New Wilmington, Pa., to Mennon and Fannie Kurtz Hartzler. Died: July 25, 1996, West Liberty, Ohio. Survivors—children: Don, Lorraine Hoover, Donna Walker, Wayne; sister and brother: Florence Kauffman, Ira Hartzler; 7 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Paul M. King (husband). Funeral and burial: July 29, South Union Mennonite Church, by Randy Reminder.

Lehman, Alverda Stutzman, 81, Albany, Ore. Born: Dec. 2, 1914, Wood River, Neb., to Ira and Mary Boshart Stutzman. Died: Aug. 4, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—children: Leaford, Larry, Leila Kuhns, Melva Lehman, Clara Moberly; brothers and sisters: Hubert, Paul, Larry, Pearl, Mabel Heyerly, Olivene Heyerly, Marie Schweitzer, Ruth Shank, Grace Martin; 7 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Chester Lehman (husband). Funeral: Aug. 7, Bethany Mennonite Church, by John Willems and James Schweitzer. Burial: Fairview Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Lopez, Luis, 48, Kitchener, Ont. Born: April 14, 1948, El Salvador. Died: July 14, 1996, Kitchener, Ont. Survivors—wife: Margarita Lopez; children: Esmeralda, Yasmin. Funeral and burial: July 16, First Mennonite Church, by Rebecca Yoder Neufeld.

Markley, Ephriam B., 78. Born: April 21, 1918, Line Lexington, Pa., to Jacob and Minnie Bowers Markley. Died: Aug. 2, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—wife: Naomi Freed Markley; children: Mary L. Godshall, Chris F. Graybeal, Kenneth F. Freed, Glenn F. Markley; 11 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Aug. 5, Towamencin Mennonite Church, by Steven C. Nyce and Harold M. Fly.

Martin, William H., Sr., 96, Manheim, Pa. Born: June 20, 1900, Waynesboro, Va., to Daniel Roth and Savilla Driver Martin. Died: July 22, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of ruptured aneurysm. Survivors—children: Hershey L., William H. Jr., Gertrude E. Burkholder, Barbara Sue Heistand, Robert W., E. Jane Davis, Virginia P. Brubaker; sisters and brother: Bertha Martin, Fannie Heatwole, Ralph L.; 31 grandchildren, 66 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Florence E. Hershey Martin (first wife), Elizabeth Showalter Martin (second wife). Funeral: July 26, Erisman Mennonite Church, by H. Howard Witmer, Eric Henderson, Norman G. Shenk, Parke M. Heller, and Carlton Stambaugh. Burial: Garber Mennonite Fellowship.

He was ordained at Garbers Mennonite Fellowship in 1932.

Miller, Gideon B., 57, Sarasota, Fla. Born: Oct. 22, 1938, Bird-in-Hand, Pa., to Eli and Arie Miller. Died: July 17, 1996, Long Island, N.Y., in a plane crash. Survivors—wife: Betty Herr Miller; children: Michael, Karla Esh; sisters: Sarah Ann Zook, Katie Zook, Mary Ebersol Fisher, Nancy Stoltzfus, Rachel Stoltzfus, Emma Ebersol, Rebecca Esh; 3 grandchildren. Funeral services: July 22, Mellinger Mennonite Church, by Don Augsburger, July 28, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, by Barry Loop. Burial: Mellinger Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Miller, Michael L., 34, White Pigeon, Mich. Born: May 26, 1962, South Bend, Ind., to Jake and Dorothy Hostetler Miller. Died: July 18, 1996, Elkhart, Ind., in an automobile accident. Survivors—parents; brother and sisters: Bruce, Debbie Markiewicz, Dawn Halcomb. Funeral: July 22, First Mennonite Church, by Joe Slabach and David Helmuth. Burial: Grace Lawn Cemetery.

Mininger, Martha C., 85, Souderton, Pa. Born: Sept. 14, 1910, Franconia, Pa., to Levi L. and Edna D. Clemmer Alderfer. Died: Aug. 2, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—nephew: Robert A. Greaser (raised by the Miningers); brothers and sisters: Abram C. and Levi C. Alderfer, Alma Clemmer, Edna C. Freed. Predeceased by: Curtis L. Mininger (husband). Funeral: Aug. 4, Souderton Mennonite Homes, by Michael A. Meneses and Douglas B. Jantzi. Burial: Plains Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Morrison, Emma Horst, 97, Cambridge, Ont. Born: Feb. 20, 1899, Kitchener, Ont., to Benjamin and Lydia Ann Shantz Horst. Died: July 19, 1996, Cambridge, Ont. Survivors—daughter: June Witmer; 4 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by husband. Funeral: July 22, Edward R. Good Funeral Home, by Brice Balmer. Burial: First Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Naffziger, Phoebe Emma Schroeder, 71, Harper, Kan. Born: June 25, 1925, Newton, Kan., to David and Emma Preheim Schroeder. Died: June 29, 1996, Wichita, Kan. Survivors—husband: Roy Naffziger; children: Delaine Moncado, Martha Ediger, Rhonda Gonzales, Dorothy Cloud; sisters and brothers: Viola Stuckey, Hulda Goering, Mabel Schmidt, Ralph, Lester; 10 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: July 3, Crystal Springs Mennonite Church, by Vernon Whitmore.

Richardson, Willard Ross, 53, New Hamburg, Ont. Born: March 22, 1943, Kitchener, Ont., to Alfred and Gertrude Mohr Richardson. Died: July 30, 1996, Kitchener, Ont., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Gloria Richardson; children: Sherri Papadedes, Lisa, Cindy, Anthony; brothers: Bruce, Carl, James; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 2, Nith Valley Mennonite Church, by Robert Thaler and Amzie Brubacher. Burial: Riverside Cemetery.

Riegsecker, Amos, 91, Middlebury, Ind. Born: Feb. 5, 1905, Middlebury, Ind., to Ben and Louise Graber Riegsecker. Died: April 20, 1996, Goshen, Ind., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Elizabeth Hess; son: Verlin; sister: Lydia; 3 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, 14 step-grandchildren, 20 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elizabeth Wittmer (first wife). Funeral and burial: April 22, Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, by Ron Kennel and Kevin Skaggs.

Short, Mary E. Allbright, 62, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Aug. 20, 1933, Greasy Ridge, Ohio, to William and Pearl Massie Allbright, Sr. Died: July 16, 1996, Toledo, Ohio. Survivors—husband: Theron J. Short; children: Sherri Hall, Laura Schrock; sisters and brothers: Pat Clevenger, Alice Allbright, Nellie Brown, John, Frank; 2 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Beth Ann Short (daughter). Funeral and burial: July 20, Lockport Mennonite Church, by Allen Rutter.

West, Audrey Zehr, 69, Lowville, N.Y. Born: Jan. 26, 1927, New Bremen, N.Y., to Reuben and Marion Lehman Zehr. Died: July 20, 1996, Lowville, N.Y. of cancer. Survivors—mother: Marion Grau; children: Randy, Robert, Rick, Charles, Roxy Bush, Pamela Judd, Jodie White; brother: Robert Zehr; 13 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Henry R. West (husband). Funeral and burial: July 23, First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, by Lester Bauman and Bruce Lyndaker.

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THE LAST WORD

In praise of 90-year-old women:

What keeps leaders going

Often one can learn as much about people from the stories they tell as the sermons they preach. I was reminded of that at a recent consultation on pastoral and theological leadership (see story in August 6 issue of *Gospel Herald*).

During that two-day meeting, several persons were asked to talk about their pilgrimages as Mennonite church leaders and pastors. All did so with stories.

Keith Harder, pastor of First Mennonite Church in Hillsboro, Kan., told how he was meeting people after his sermon one Sunday when a 90-year-old parishioner stopped him with, "Are you still praying for me?" Keith remembered a promise he had made during a previous visit—and resolved he would never again promise to do something on which he wouldn't deliver.

Then Duane Beck, pastor of Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., told how he found a direction from a casual comment from one of his members—a 90-year-old woman. He had asked her about her spiritual life. "What I need to do is keep growing," she replied.

Still later, N. Gerald Shenk, a teacher at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., told of being a visiting preacher at a large congregation in another community. After his sermon on the grace of God, most of the people he met wanted to make connections between his family and theirs. Except for one 90-year-old woman. Her comment: "I thank God every day for the grace that's come to me, a sinner."

There it was, packed into three stories, in one 48-hour consultation: a hint at where leaders get some of their inspiration, at what helps set their direction, of who it might be shapes and influences them.

"What keeps you going?" I'm often asked, particularly when "Readers Say" letters in this publication seem to be critical. I've never yet answered, "90-year-old women." But well I might. The stories I heard at the pastoral and theological education consultation brought back memories from my own experience.

I especially recall the 95-year-old woman who became my chief encourager when I was the editor of a periodical for youth back in the late 1960s. She came from a congregation that had decided early on that *With* magazine was too "liberal" for its youth. "So don't tell anyone I'm writing to you," she began her letters.

Which came almost every month. They always had a word of encouragement, sometimes a critique, even an admonition, but always a prayer. This from a 95-year-old woman who read and supported a youth publication and its editor because the church had named both. I cried when her obituary appeared in these pages a number of years ago. To this day I remember her words when things get rough.

There's a quiet ministry going on among us. It's being done by people who are not public figures, believers who live quietly behind the scenes praying, reacting, encouraging, and giving Spirit-led comments that help set direction for those who have been called by God to give leadership to the church. These persons tend to be older. And, if the consultation stories and my experience are any indication, they also tend to be female.

Evidently these older women encouragers were already operating in the early days of the church. When the apostles wanted to give a new name to Joseph, a Levite who became a believer, they chose Barnabas, which means, "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36, NRSV).

The ministry of encouragement was also one that received special mention from the apostle Paul. "Encourage the faint hearted, help the weak," he wrote in 1 Thess. 5:14. To his "son" Timothy he said, "Convince, rebuke, and *encourage*" (2 Tim. 4:2, italics mine).

One must always be careful about making too much of words and the order in which they appear in our English Bibles, however they have been translated from the Greek. But we might do well to ponder that when Paul lists spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12:28, "forms of assistance" get mentioned before "forms of leadership" (NRSV).

All of us can be encouragers. But some receive the ability to encourage as a special gift. Among these are a host of 90-year-old women throughout the church. We would do well to recognize their gifts—and be grateful.—*jlp*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Marlin Birkey:
Learning to know and practice the passions of God's heart 6

Native Americans meet for fellowship in Montana 9

Mennonites help to organize Celebration of Diversity 9

My vision for the Mennonite church (2):

That we be congregations of joy, hope, and receptivity

Continuing a series by 24 Mennonite leaders on where the church should go in the future and how we will get there.

by Ann Weber Becker

It was on the sidewalks of Purdue University, at the 1987 Mennonite Church General Assembly, that I noticed it first—a Mennonite habit that set us apart from others on campus. I saw scores of Mennonites, of virtually any age and description, walking along in deep conversation—and looking at their feet.

In the years since the Purdue meeting, I have at intervals noted the angle of the gaze of groups of Mennos in other settings. Each time I have been reassured that I am among my people by the way we walk; most of us make our way along with eyes downcast at the ground, our shoes, or nothing in particular.

Actually I am not surprised by this. Our particular perspective on life and faith often makes us acutely aware of injustice, undeserved pain, and suffering in the world and within the body of Christ. We yearn for things to be made right and often work tirelessly to try to make it so. We take seriously Jesus' call to take up the cross and follow him and search our souls to know what that means. All the while, we are keenly aware of our own short-

"My vision is that we will honor the scraps of hope which people offer who are different from us, crossing the barriers of fear to meet one another."

comings and inadequacies as we attempt to live lives befitting true disciples of Christ.

This perspective has borne many good fruits. It has brought relief to the hungry and thirsty—both literally (to those in physical need), and figuratively (to those yearning to hear the gospel of peace). It is a perspective to be celebrated—but one that is carried at some cost. The hurt of the world is a heavy load. Is it any wonder that we walk around looking at our feet?

I hope that in the years to come we might discover a slightly different balance of cross and resurrection, suffering and hope, pain and joy. The close of the "Discipleship" article in the new *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* states that, "As we follow Jesus, we look not only to the cross, but through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection" (Article 17).

What does the "joy of the resurrection" look like? Not a naïve cheerfulness, blind to the brokenness wrought by greed and fear and other deadly sins. Not an irresponsible quest for happiness, centered only on oneself without regard for others. Instead, it is a joy that is fed by "a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:14). It is a hope that lifts our heads to see the trees, the horizon, and the stars.

The world is in need of genuine joy as much as ever. Could it be that our "special gift" as Mennonites in years to come is to rediscover joy on the path of discipleship?

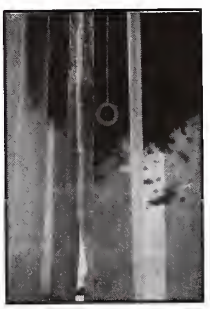
How might we work at this? Here are a few ideas to get us started:

- Plan worship in such a way that we are sent out with a sense of energy and well-being, empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Sing hymns that evoke joy.
- Cultivate a close relationship with at least one child. Discover her eye for the amusing. Experience his capacity for joy. Ponder Jesus' teaching to become like children.
- Seek out people who seem to know both the cost of following Christ and the joy of that call. Invite them to speak in churches and conferences, to mentor our youth, and to be conversation partners with our young adults.
- Balance every "should" or "must" that we impose on ourselves or others with a litany of thanks for what is and has been.

If I find myself at Orlando '97, and wherever we are in 1999, I hope to see flocks of Mennonites walking the sidewalks engaged in deep, vital, and even solemn conversations—with heads held high. That will be a sign to me that we have not only discovered the courage to press on down the path of discipleship but that we also possess the strength to do so in joy.

Ann Weber Becker lives in Kitchener, Ont., where she works at home on various church and writing projects while raising two small boys.

Your responses and your vision for the church of the future are welcomed. Send them to "Vision," Gospel Herald, *616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com*



by Sue C. Steiner

Ten years from now, I'd like the Mennonite family of churches to be known for our butterfly quilts.

Last fall, the Women's Missionary and Service Commission of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church in Waterloo, Ont., received an invitation they couldn't refuse. Women from a craft class run by Ruth Hess at Kingston Prison for Women had appliqued butterfly patches to be made into a quilt top. But the women of Kingston Prison didn't have the necessary quilting skills, and the women of St. Jacobs certainly did.

The women of St. Jacobs said yes. As they quilted, an idea grew on them. Perhaps they could deliver the finished quilt to the prison five hours away and meet the women who had created these patches of hope.

So one Sunday last November, it happened—just when publicity abounded in Ontario about prisoners' living conditions being "too cushy." The women of St. Jacobs visited with women of the craft class in the Kingston Prison, some of them "lifers" who killed to get out of abusive domestic situations. The women talked together about their crafts during a show-and-tell time and found that they shared interests.

That visit to Kingston became an acted parable of 1 John 4:18, "There is no fear in love, for perfect love casts out fear." Simple and very imperfect human love, based in Christ's love, took away the fear of being in such a strange place. Simple human love, based in Christ's love, helped people see each other as ordinary

women, drawn together by a butterfly quilt. Simple human love, based in Christ's love, caused barriers to crumble even though the physical prison walls very much remained.

At the end of the visit, John Hess, the Mennonite chaplain at the prison, said, "What your group did today is indescribable. It raised the women's self-esteem as you accepted them as equals."

I hope that ten years from now we are known all over North America for our butterfly quilts. My vision is that we will honor the scraps of hope which people who are different from us offer; that we will cross barriers of fear and meet one another as real human beings; that together we will take our scraps of hope and create from them something warm and beautiful in cooperation with God's Spirit.

The next few years may be a particular time of testing for Mennonites in North America. We're in an era of declining public resources. The temptation is to cling tenaciously to what we've got and to let ourselves get polarized into special interest groups looking out for "our kind." The temptation is to join the search for scapegoats—whether they be people on social assistance, criminals, unionized workers, persons working in the public sector, upper-income tax cheats, or whomever.

My vision is that we will continue to get close enough to people who are different to understand life from their perspective in the light of God's love for all of us. My vision is that we will make the kind of connections that magnify hope. We need to keep empowering our mission boards to make such connections, and we also need to make them happen in our local communities and personally.

My vision is for many kinds of butterfly quilts as we form partnerships with people whose "different-ness" we might have feared. My vision is that God's love will cast out our fear so we are freed to let God's healing and hope flow not only through us but also *to* us. My vision is that we'll open the clenched fists in which we hold our own pathetic little scraps of hope—and invite God's Spirit to design and stitch them together into something way beyond our imagining.

Sue C. Steiner is a pastor in the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, currently enjoying some "sacred in-between time" for study, writing, and consulting—and soon to be interim pastor at Nith Valley Mennonite Church. She lives with her husband, Sam, in Waterloo.

by Ann Showalter

My vision for the Mennonite church is that we learn to receive as well as to give. The Mennonite church gives in a variety of ways—from taking food to the sick to shoveling mud from the homes of strangers after a flood. We understand giving and sharing as a central part of discipleship. I'm grateful to be part of a church that believes in the importance of expressing faith through our hearts, hands, and feet as well as through the intellect and with words.

We teach, preach, heal, and give money, time, and energy. We reach around the world with programs to help meet the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of others. Some of us even believe we are uniquely gifted at combining faith and action, peace and justice, personal responsibility and mutual aid. Much of what we do might be called praiseworthy.

Why am I concerned that we learn to receive?

Many years ago, for most of one year, I was unable to care for our family because of illness. My husband, close relatives, and friends provided most of the care for our four young children. We depended on hired help to do the ordinary housekeeping tasks. People from the church gave generously to our family in many ways during that year. We appreciated being part of a caring community of faith.

That year was both a humbling experience and a blessing. It was humbling to feel dependent on others, to be out of control of my own life. At the same time it was a blessing to receive so much from so many. I discovered new dimensions of grace and love in receiving from others. Being on the receiving side of life feels very different from being on the giving side, and I confess it is far easier for me to give than to be dependent on the goodness of others.

As a church we are so accustomed to giving that it hardly crosses our minds that others may have gifts that can enrich us. Rarely do we acknowledge that the church is needy, nor do we place ourselves in a position to receive from others. We seem to know what we need and are confident we have the resources to provide for ourselves. This attitude prevails whether we are talking about material, spiritual, or theological issues. Our North American church is not needy—at least not in our own eyes.

Yet that was not the message our non-West-

"I long for the day when Mennonites can receive gifts from the poor, the rejected, and those excluded today because they understand truth differently from us."

ern sisters and brothers gave us last summer at Wichita '95. They agreed we have much materially, but they frequently found us lacking in spiritual depth.

Most of us like to be in charge of what happens to us. Are we unaware of being needy and reluctant to receive from others because when we receive, we are no longer in control? In our society and in the church, the ability to give usually means we are in positions of power and privilege. The church as giver decides who will receive; the church as teacher decides who, what, when, and where to teach; the church as preacher decides what message is important; the church as theologian decides which theology is right and which is wrong; the church as healer chooses who deserves and receives healing care.

The church certainly must make such decisions about its ministry and message, but it should not deny that the church also has needs. Receiving from others means becoming vulnerable, acknowledging that we are not complete and that we need to hear God's message from those whose background and culture is different from ours. The world and God's message look and sound different through the eyes and words of the poor, people of color, and those who feel excluded from the circles of decision-making.

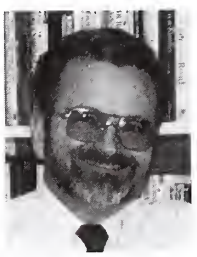
One of the unique gifts Jesus offered the people of his day was his openness to receive from those who were excluded from the synagogue, the family, and the community for a variety of reasons. He dared ask a Samaritan woman for a drink, to invite himself to the home of Zacchaeus, to accept the loving gestures of a woman of the street and the lavish outpouring of perfume from the hands of another woman. Yes, Jesus said he came to minister and not to be ministered to, yet he graciously received the gifts of the rejected and outcast.

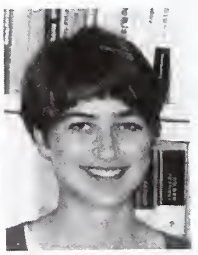
I long for the day when the Mennonite church can receive gifts from the poor, the rejected, and those who today are excluded from our communities of faith because they understand Scripture differently from the majority. Otherwise, we deprive ourselves of great gifts others have to offer and discount their significance as worthy companions on our journey of faith.

Ann Showalter is moderator of Rocky Mountain Conference and associate pastor of First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colo. She has four adult children.

***"If you turn back, I will take you back. . . . I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless."*—Jer. 15:19-20**

Gospel Herald





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As a delegate, pastor, and overseer in Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, I was disappointed in the reporting in ***Indiana-Michigan Conference Passes Statement on Homosexuality and Membership; Future Unclear*** (July 23).

True, we delegates reaffirmed the new *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* adopted at Mennonite General Assembly at Wichita, Kan., in 1995. And we approved the Purdue 1987 statement on homosexuality adopted by Mennonite General Assembly. Both of these call us as leaders of congregations and conference to endorse only those sexual unions that are between a man and a woman in a marriage covenant.

Beyond this, the delegates also adopted the "Inter-Congregational/ Conference Discernment Guidelines for Issues of Faith and Practice." This document establishes a procedure by which leaders of conference or members of congregations can intervene in the decisions of a congregation or leader who is not following our faith and practice. I have not read of this action in the media. Why?

Should we as delegates have supported a blanket expulsion of membership for Southside Fellowship when there are members at Southside who differ with their leaders and would prefer not to accept practicing homosexuals as members nor sanction that lifestyle? We delegates did not hear from these members from Southside who differed. Nor are they heard in our media. Why?

I believe there will be no resolution as long as persons on both sides use this issue to get a following. This issue will be solved when the rank and file members of the church simply refuse to follow the pro and con sides and simply ask their leaders to follow our stated faith and practice and deal with the issue in a pastoral way—just as we deal with any other problem or sin that arises in a congregation.

John F. Murray
Kouts, Ind.

While riding in a van to a Promise Keepers meeting, a pastor —who was not an Anabaptist—said to me: "Would it make any difference if the kingdom were now here? I don't think Jesus addressed social issues."

This identifies precisely what is a huge hole in a large segment of North American Christianity—the evangelical neglect of the Jesus ethic. I am becoming increasingly aware that, although the lingo sounds the same, "love your enemies" means something entirely different to those who are not nonresistant.

As Tom Finger notes in ***The Place to Begin Mennonite Theology*** (July 30), the integrity of the gospel must not only contain the saviorhood of Jesus by his death. It must also include what Jesus taught and exemplified by his life.

I believe if the larger evangelical segment of North American Christians would embrace Jesus' ethics, i.e., *follow* him, the distinction between the two kingdoms would be more identifiable, would become more polarized, and would eliminate the near-constant need for the cheerleading and door-to-door type of evangelism we now see.

This ethic of Jesus is the key message that needs to be delivered to North American Christianity.

Loren Helmuth
Abbeville, S.C.

I really appreciated ***The Right Words*** by Shirley Bustos (July 30). Having experienced my brother's death six months ago, hardly a day goes by that I shed no tears. This becomes embarrassing to me at times, but just as the chaplain at this retirement home tells me, I believe tears are healing and helpful.

In Psalms 56:8 we read, "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." Perhaps the good Lord sees that my bottle isn't quite full yet. So I might hang a sign outside my apartment door that says, "Come in and cry with me."

Grace Lehman
Lititz, Pa.

What a rare, precious, and beautiful lead article by Steve Kriss, ***Here, Among Mennonites, I Have Seen God*** (Aug. 6). In simple yet eloquent prose, he outlined personal, convincing reasons for choosing to align with this particular—and sometimes peculiar— faith community within the larger family of God. I find this kind of testimony is sorely needed and encouraging amid the forces that would pull us asunder.

Your editorial in the same issue, ***When the Church Won't Buy Your Computer***, on personal versus group beliefs, was insightful and certainly complimented the cover article. And the material in between t'warn't bad either!

Be encouraged to continued good works.

Jim Bishop
Harrisonburg, Va.

It is with real consternation that I read of the Mennonite church's drive toward a new definition of leadership as reported in ***Consultation Asks If Mennonites Are Ready for a New Definition of Pastoral Leadership*** (Aug. 6).

There is nothing new about such models of leadership. This is just plain pagan worldliness in a 20th-century suit. One would have thought that the definitive word had already been spoken when Jesus replied to James' and John's quest for leadership:

"You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:42-44).

Not so with you, indeed.

Mitchell Brown
Wilmette, Ill.

Pontius' Puddle

Learning to know and practice

God is eager to shape our hearts to be passionate about the same things God is passionate about. This happens when we come with repentant hearts and ask.

by Marlin Birkey

How could it have happened? How could the Pharisees lose touch with the heart of God? After all, as the apostle Paul pointed out, they were "entrusted with the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). To them belonged "the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises" (Rom. 9:4). Even Jesus came from their lineage. How could a people so blessed of God and so central to God's purposes receive such a scathing indictment as Paul gave them in Rom. 10:2: "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge"?

The Pharisees had no shortage of zeal. They were consumed with God, with the law, with conforming all of life to the will of God as they understood it. They had a passion for pleasing God—or at least for not displeasing God.

Zeal was not the problem. Rather, the Pharisees had simply lost touch with the heart and mind of God. They no longer saw clearly the burdens and concerns of God's heart. Thus their religious fervor was directed into activity and worship which could not be pleasing to God. The flaming arrows of their zeal were completely missing the target. Fired up they were, but very out of touch with God.

Losing touch with God's heart is a possibility for God's people in every age, including our own. Israelite history and the history of the church have proven over and over again how easy it is for God's people to slide off the track into irrelevance. God has a long record of attempts to get people redirected and back on course. The prophets were spokespersons for God, boldly stepping forward to restate God's central concerns. But the people turned deaf ears. It seems that people who have "zeal for God but not in accordance with knowledge" are not all that interested in discovering or admitting their condition. So the prophets ended up dead or in dungeons or exiled or ridiculed and ignored, and the people went on as before.

Mennonites have tremendous zeal for God. There is fervor, hustle, bustle, and all kinds of activity in our religious camp. Is it possible that someone could one day stand up and say of us, "They have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge"? We would like to give a resounding "No," but humility and a healthy respect for the deceptiveness of the human heart demand that we say that it is possible.

Can we even insist that unless we find ways to keep our eyes and ears open to the critique of the Spirit, careening off the course is inevitable? Movement away from "knowledge" for God's people in any time and any place, unless that movement is discerned and repented of, results in religious expression which actually perverts the true nature and character of God. This is what happened to the Pharisees.

What is knowledge? What are the true concerns and passions of God's heart? Although the following list is not exhaustive, at least these four things are revealed in Scripture as God's passionate concerns. These must also dominate our hearts and attention if our zeal for God is to be "in accordance with knowledge."

God has a passionate concern for the lost—people in spiritual darkness who have not yet repented of their sin and placed their faith in Jesus Christ. By his own words, Jesus declared, "For the Son of Man has come to seek

and to save that which was lost." Paul echoed these words when he wrote, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). Peter added, "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Make no mistake about it, God desires the lost to be saved.

Quite in contrast, as Win and Charles Arn have reported in *The Master Plan for Making Disciples*, reaching non-Christians is a low priority for congregations today. In the Arns' words, "Making disciples has become, in most congregations, a compartmentalized function, isolated from the mainstream of church thinking and life." Is there a danger here that our zeal for God is not in accordance with knowledge?

God has a passionate concern that those who trust in Jesus Christ be built together in true community, each member maturing spiritually, growing in personal holiness, and learning to use spiritual gifts in ministry to others. This kind of community is not fostered in large-group worship services. We have tried to make worship services serve this purpose by incorporating sharing times into our services. But this kind of community happens best through face-to-face encounters in small groups of people in which honesty, accountability, and feelings of responsibility for one another are prized. These groups provide people with concrete and regular opportunities to use their gifts in ministry to each other.

Yet many congregations view small groups as a program or an appendage—a fellowship opportunity there for people if they choose to participate. Paul said in Rom. 12:5, "So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another." Mennonites believe that loving committed relationships with God and with others are two parts of the same whole. Where, then, are the congregations who require involvement in a community-building small group as a condition for church membership right along with a confession of faith in Christ? Are we giving lip service to a belief that we really don't care to practice?

It is extremely important to God that the body be "fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causing the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).

God is passionately concerned that acts of compassion flow forth from God's people to the poor, the oppressed, and the downtrodden. Jesus described his own ministry in Luke 4 as preaching good news to the poor, proclaiming release for captives and recovery of sight to the blind, setting free those who are trampled underfoot. Certainly we who are being conformed to the image of Christ should describe our own call to ministry in similar terms. So closely connected is Jesus to the poor and needy that to minister to those who are hungry and thirsty, who are strangers, who are naked, sick, or in prison, is to minister to Jesus himself (Matt. 25:35-40).

We live in a consumer society which values personal comforts and conveniences above everything else. Few of us are willing to reduce our standard of living in order to release more time and money for the care of the poor. Could it be said of us, whose congregations spend the largest percentage of our income on ourselves, that we have a zeal for God but not in accordance with knowledge?

God has a passionate desire that worship and thanksgiving arise to God's throne in a mighty, unified chorus. Corporate worship and celebration have been a hallmark of God's people through the ages. Although we should worship God individually, God's heart is blessed and God's power released into our lives when we gather to "proclaim the excellencies of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

We should be thankful for the current shift in thinking across the Christian church which is reaffirming praise and worship as a dynamic spirit, soul, and body encounter with a living God. This is a God who inhabits the praises of the people. Worship is not primarily a cerebral exercise.

How does our zeal for God line up with knowledge? Is there room in our thinking for the possibility that we might be off-track? God is eager to shape our hearts so that we are passionate about the same things that God is passionate about. And God will gladly do this if we come humbly with repentant hearts and ask.

Marlin Birkey is pastor of the Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church and a 1990 graduate of Hesston (Kan.) College pastoral ministries program. He and Cherie are the parents of three children, ages 12, 14, and 16.

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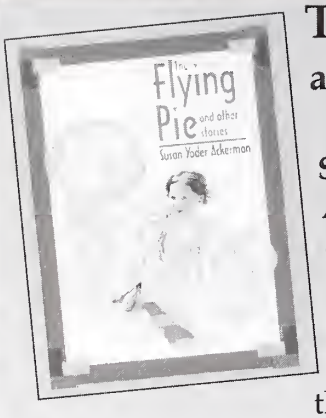

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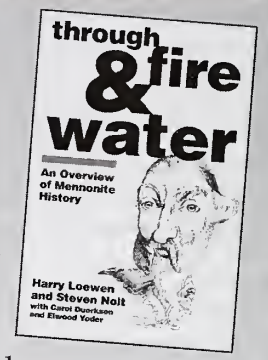
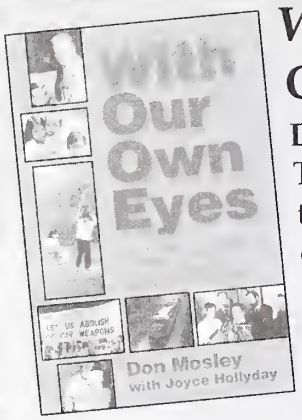


Edited by Harry Loewen and Steven Nolt

Reformers, self-styled prophets, teachers, preachers, and common folk come alive in this fast-paced history. ***Through Fire and Water*** is written in an accessible narrative style that gives an accurate look at Mennonites, from the 1500s to today. Includes stories, photos, maps, and cartoons.

Paper, 320 pages, $14.95; in Canada $21.50.



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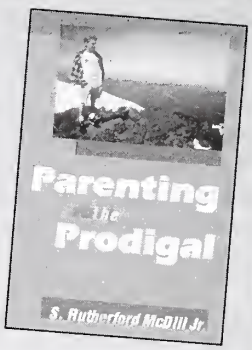

S. Rutherford McDill Jr.

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Native American Mennonites meet for fellowship in Montana

Lame Deer, Mont. (GCMC-MC)—"Honor Jesus Christ Through Faith, Hope, and Love" was the theme of a gathering of Native American Mennonites who met near Lame Deer, Mont., July 24-28. Over 150 people who relate to United Native Ministries (Mennonite Church), Native Ministries (Conference of Mennonites in Canada), or Mennonite Indian Leaders Council (General Conference Mennonite Church) attended Assembly '96.

The diversity of the group became evident as those gathered named their tribal ancestry: Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cherokee, Choctaw, Cree, Creek, Crow, Hopi, Hidatsa, Kiowa-Commanche, Lakota, Metis, Mohawk, Navajo, Northern Cheyenne, Ojibwa, Potawatomi Shawnee, and Southern Cheyenne.

A colorful banner, which showed a tepee and cross against a rising sun with a rainbow above, was displayed. Joe Walks Along Jr., of Lame Deer, painted the banner.

Various speakers shared during the event. Terry Widrick of Mohawk background, Selkirk, Man., urged participants to reflect God's love, especially by loving those who disagree with them.

A variety of music was performed, including translated hymns in Hopi and Choctaw, country western gospel, Indian flute, indigenous spiritual songs in Crow and Cheyenne, and an Ojibwa song.

Workshops were also an important part of the assembly. Northern Cheyenne Joe Walks Along Sr., pastor from Lame Deer, led a workshop in which he told of his own experiences with racism both inside and outside the church. Ethan Good, Neshoba, Miss., presented a workshop on "Healing Damaged Emotions." He urged the restoration of altars—the places where we meet God—through prayer, honesty, and time.

Other workshops included topics such as integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church and indigenous gospel music.

In the final Bible study, Nadenia Myron gave blankets to three elders for their service: Essie Cotton (Choctaw), Gladys Old Mouse (Northern Cheyenne), and Carrie Jacobson (Metis). She also called the pastors present to come forward for anointing and individual prayer for their ministries.

Two participants at the Native American gathering near Lame Deer, Mont., are shown here: Essie Cotton (Choctaw) from Mississippi, and Bertha Little Coyote (Southern Cheyenne) from Oklahoma. They are both 84 years old.

The Northern Cheyenne Mennonite churches in Lame Deer, Busby, Mont., and Ashland, Mont., hosted the event. They began food preparation last year by harvesting and preserving wild plums, June berries, and chokecherries. The meat from 12 deer was also dried for the occasion.

—*Malcolm Wenger*

An alternative to the KKK:

Mennonites help to plan Celebration of Diversity in Elkhart County

Goshen, Ind.—Mennonites in Elkhart County played a key role in planning a Celebration of Diversity that offered a counter-message to a Ku Klux Klan rally held here on Aug. 17.

Over 1,000 people attended the diversity event at Shanklin Park—a cross-cultural gathering that included activities for children, ethnic foods, a prayer tent, international music, workshops, and speeches about relationships across ethnic lines and confronting prejudice and racism.

The event grew out of a response to the KKK rally held at the Elkhart County Courthouse about a mile away. Some 30 robed KKK members, 340 pro-Klan demonstrators, and 140 Klan protesters showed up at the KKK rally.

Several Mennonites spoke during a two-hour educational section that occurred at the same time as the KKK rally downtown. Rebecca Horst of Goshen College (GC) gave a brief history of the KKK and its racially-motivated crimes. "The Klan does a very good job of teaching their children to believe their lies," said Horst.

'It is a step.' Sheldon Burkhalter of GC said that the Klan appeals to people who feel they haven't gotten a fair chance in life. "They prey on the disenfranchised," he said of the Klan.

Atlee Beechy of the Peace Ministries Center of College Mennonite Church called racism "a major peace and justice issue," adding, "I hope the record will show that this gathering stood up for peace and justice for all, started a love flame, and ignited a movement that changed the racial climate in this country and did so with joy and love."

"Inti," a music group from GC that includes students Alex Naula, Janet Henry, and Phil Christano, was one of several music groups to perform at the event. Members of Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor served tostadas and other foods at a booth.

Marty Kelley from GC admitted that the event wouldn't end racism. "But it is a step. It is a beginning," she said.

Bob Schreiner, pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church and president of the Goshen Ministerial Association (GMA) that helped to sponsor the event, estimates that close to 100 people were involved in planning the celebration.

According to Linda Slabaugh Miller of Assembly Mennonite Church, who helped to plan children's activities, planners hope to make the Celebration of Diversity an annual event.

—*from news reports*

Music and the Masai. *Lancaster, Pa. (LMH)*—Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School (LMH) music teacher John Miller (right center) directs the school's touring choir, Campus Chorale, at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Masai Fair near Nairobi, Kenya. The LMH choir was one of five choirs to perform at the fair, begun by MCC several years ago.

The 24-member choir, accompanied by Miller and five other adults, traveled to Africa this summer on a "learning and witness" tour. The group sang at churches and schools, visited the homes of two choir members from South Africa, and did some sightseeing. They also painted classrooms at Rosslyn Academy in Nairobi, where Miller taught for seven years before coming to LMH. In addition to spending time in Kenya and South Africa, the group visited London, England, where they gave a program at London Mennonite Fellowship.

Mennonites to open doors of school in Argentina

Neuquen, Argentina (MBM)—After five long years of praying, building, and planning, the Mennonite church here is nearly ready to open the doors of a new Mennonite school in Argentina.

"[Next year] we're going to start with four- and five-year-olds as a kindergarten and then work our way up from there," says Liliana Roldan, coordinator of the school project, referring to the upcoming school year. "The vision is much bigger than just a kindergarten."

Edgardo Sanchez, pastor of the Mennonite church in Neuquen, has a grand vision for the Mennonite school, which he wants to eventually become the first Christian university in the country of Argentina, according to Roldan. She acknowledges, however, that the fulfillment of that vision is a long way off. "The vision is wide, but the possibilities aren't," Roldan says.

Issues of faith. Some of the struggles faced in starting such a school include the need for quality teachers, curriculum, and freedom from government control. "It's not just what is taught but also how and why," Roldan says. The Neuquen school planners want to find Christian teachers for all subjects. They also want to be independent of any governmental control so that they can write their own curriculum and offer the subjects they choose. In order to do this, they cannot receive any money from the Argentine government, which creates some financial hardship in starting a new school.

Issues of faith will enter into everyday teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic, according to Roldan. Organizers of the school want to offer a number of subjects that are often ignored by the public school system. Teaching English to all students is a high priority, in addition to music, art, swimming, computers, and drama.

Roldan says that before formally beginning any physical work on the Mennonite school project, the organizers needed to discover if the church would lend its support. "We knew that if the church was not in favor of the school, we should not be attempting to do it at all."

When Sanchez asked the congregation if they would support the school project, about 90 percent said they would. Some offered to help with construction, others with cleaning or teaching.

The church owns a small piece of land with enough room for three classrooms, bathrooms, a small kitchen, and a covered patio for gym classes. The congregation is looking for a larger piece of land to buy.—*Christy Risser*

Former publisher works with homeless boys

Eldorado, Argentina (MBM)—What began as an act of desperate compassion has grown into a residence and school for homeless boys in a remote part of Argentina.

Glen Witmer, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) overseas mission associate in the Misiones province of Argentina, decided that he had enough of living the high-powered corporate lifestyle. A native of Scarborough, Ont., Witmer had worked as a teacher and publisher as well as for the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. in television and video.

"I devoted the first half of my life to myself, and I decided to give the second half to someone else," says Witmer.

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The "someone else" in this case is the abused and homeless boys living on the streets of Eldorado, Argentina. In September 1992, Witmer, who lived and worked in Eldorado, could no longer stand to see young boys sleeping in the town square with no blankets or food. He decided to open a home for these boys who had nowhere else to go.

"They were too old to be put in the orphanages because they were too old to be adoptable," Witmer says. "Many of them technically weren't orphans either. It was more often the case that the boy had been living with his mother, and the mother would take in a new man—not the boy's father—to live in the house. . . . And when the new man was abusive, the boy took the brunt of the abuse. These boys would just leave, because they couldn't take the beatings."

With no halfway houses or other social support systems available to them, 8-to-14-year-old boys end up living on the streets, often stealing to stay alive.

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Witmer brought the initial six boys into his own home in February 1993. In August 1993 they moved into the building where Hogar las Palmas continues today. All of the boys must attend school in order to stay at the home.

Witmer says that serving the boys is definitely what God had in mind when working in broadcasting and publishing in Canada was no longer satisfying to Witmer.

"Everything that has happened since I went to Argentina reinforces the notion that God knows what he's doing," Witmer says.—*Christy Risser*

Hurricane César is not the first natural disaster to which Nicaraguan Mennonites and Brethren in Christ have responded. In this 1992 photo, Pablo Bejarano, member of Nicaragua's Mennonite Convención Conference, helps rebuild a home following a colossal tidal wave that doused the country's coast, killing 120 people and leaving thousands homeless.

In the wake of Hurricane César:

MCC sends money to Central American churches

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Nicaraguan, Costa Rican, and Guatemalan churches are rallying to help victims of Hurricane César, which slammed into parts of Central America July 27-28. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has so far provided $10,000 to assist the churches in their outreach, and the relief organization is calling for more funds.

Meeting immediate needs. Nicaragua and Costa Rica bore the brunt of the storm. In Nicaragua, the hurricane raged through the Caribbean lowlands, home to 70-80 Anabaptist churches. The timing couldn't have been worse, reports Bob Buxman, MCC Nicaragua codirector. The area's residents, mostly subsistence farmers, were harvesting the season's first rice, corn, and beans. Nearly 70,000 acres of crops—valued at $24 million—were destroyed. Additionally, 20,000 people had to flee their homes, and property damages are estimated at $15 million. Some 10,000 Nicaraguans are still stranded in 39 relief camps across the country.

The Anabaptist Emergency Commission—consisting of representatives from various Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups in Nicaragua—will distribute $3,000 worth of food and supplies to meet immediate needs in the hardest-hit communities.

In Costa Rica, Hurricane César killed at least 40 people and damaged some 3,000 houses as well as roads, bridges, aqueducts, hospitals, and schools. MCC's partner in Costa Rica—the interdenominational Council of Churches for Emergency and Reconstruction—has requested and will receive $3,000 to help transport food and supplies gathered by Costa Rican Christians to the affected areas.

The Costa Rican Mennonite Church is also planning a response to the hurricane, with food and material aid purchased with MCC's help.

Hurricane César brought on mudslides in Guatemala, in the Ixil Triangle area where MCC workers Richard and Ruth Anne Friesen are located. The Guatemalan Primitive Methodist Church will receive $4,000 to assist in rebuilding destroyed homes and to purchase food for affected families. "These Central American churches are an inspiring example of what it means to be salt of the earth by reaching out to others in times of trouble," says Ed Stamm Miller, MCC assistant secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Contributions. MCC anticipates providing another $10,000 to help the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Mennonite churches purchase seed for farmers who have lost their harvests, in the hope that the farmers will be able to plant a late winter crop.

Contributions marked "Hurricane César Relief" can be sent to MCC, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501.

Sitting in her mother's lap, a ten-year-old was the last reader at an 18 1/2-hour reading of the New Testament at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, New Wilmington, Pa.

Abby McKissick finished the last section of Revelation during the March 17 event that kicked off Maple Grove's celebration of the Year of the Bible. The read-through was no small feat for the church of 50 regular attenders. Each member was encouraged to sign up for two half-hour time slots. The high school youth read during Sunday school, and the younger children read from Mark during the service.—*Ohio Evangel*

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A motorcycle was never needed so much. That's what the "Ambassadors" Sunday school class at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., decided when they raised money to buy a motorcycle for Gregorio Flores, a man in Costa Rica whom Myron Bontreger met during his Study-Service Term at Goshen (Ind.) College. Bontreger told his home congregation about Flores, a leader in a Mennonite church in Cuatro Cruces who takes food and preaches to people in remote areas. Flores used to make the trip on bicycle, getting off to push it over rough terrain. The church sent enough money to Flores to buy a motorcycle and recently raised funds again to purchase a more powerful one.—*Millie Schmucker*

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A computer dating service was never an option for either Gloria Rhodes or Bradley Lehman. But MennoLink, an electronic-mail discussion group on the Internet, performed the same function. In 1993, Rhodes started following MennoLink and noticed Lehman's frequent and often humerous postings. In March 1995 she sent him an e-mail message which included a "technical question about computers so he would answer." They continued to correspond via e-mail and discovered common interests.

Rhodes and Lehman were married at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Aug. 10. Rhodes works at Eastern Mennonite University, and Lehman wrote six of the songs in *Hymnal: A Worship Book.*—*Jim Bishop*

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Growing trees and self-esteem are the goals of a job creation program of Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia. The program allowed six youth to plant 100,000 trees in B.C. this summer. "The use of environmental activity to train youth is an effective vehicle to get kids excited about learning and working," says coordinator Tim Neufeld. Some of the youth are discouraged about finding work or are considered "at risk." The program teaches youth perseverance to help them go after jobs they really want, says Neufeld.
—*Bruce Hildebrand*

At the margins in England:
Network of Anabaptist churches grows

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—Since 1974, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers Alan and Eleanor Kreider have planted seeds for the growth of the Anabaptist movement. Those seeds have borne fruit since the 1980s, when the Kreiders worked with others to form an Anabaptist network as hundreds of Christians from a variety of denominational traditions in England joined the Anabaptist movement.

At a June 1 consultation at the London Mennonite Centre, many of these Anabaptists—including theologians, pastors, activists, and peace workers—indicated their readiness to take their commitment to the next level. They discussed forming networks of Anabaptist-oriented congregations and planting new Anabaptist-style churches.

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"The Anabaptist movement in the United Kingdom has reached a certain critical mass in which it is possible to think of congregations, rather than just scattered individuals, associated with this movement," says MBM worker J. Nelson Kraybill, director of the London Mennonite Centre for the past five years. "We are not talking about starting a Mennonite denomination. The time may be here to start . . . a network of congregations and communities that want to identify with this radical discipleship stream, including the Mennonite churches."

Eleanor and Alan Kreider, Mennonite Board of Missions workers in Oxford, England, have helped to nurture an Anabaptist network of congregations in Great Britain. Some of those involved in this process met for a consultation at the London Mennonite Centre on June 1.

Anglicans, Baptists, house-church charismatics, Wesleyans, and other Christians have joined the Anabaptist Network, which is nurtured and supported by MBM workers like Kraybill and the Kreiders, who serve as coordinators of its nine study groups. Through their efforts, the Anabaptist network plans conferences, organizes Bible studies, provides resources on the Anabaptist movement, and publishes a magazine.

With the London Mennonite Centre looking for a new director to succeed Kraybill, the consultation, "Mennonite-Anabaptist Witness in the United Kingdom," provided an opportune time for the Centre's board of directors and these new Anabaptists to address the movement's future in Great Britain.

Although the United Kingdom is officially Christian, fewer than 10 percent of the population attends church, compared with four times that percentage in North America. Some say that the crumbling vestiges of Christendom—the political, social, and cultural dominance of the Christian religion—have shaped the church in the United Kingdom in a way that discourages evangelism, commitment to the poor, and challenging of the status quo.

But in Anabaptism, some British Christians find a model of church that could help them discover a viable future for Christianity in their country.

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"People in England say Anabaptism points us back to Jesus," says Kraybill, a native of Elizabethtown, Pa. "This truly is useful because it is reliable in teaching the gospel in a way that is still relevant for the 20th century."

The London Mennonite Centre began as a house for international students in 1952. When the Kreiders became the directors in 1974, they transformed the center into a library, a resource center, and a window into the Anabaptist movement.

As that reformation continues, Kraybill expects to see growing ties between British Anabaptists and urban Anabaptists in North America. These networks have come together as individuals embraced the ideas of the movement rather than only their heritage.

"It is not ethnically tied. Instead of primarily emphasizing ethics and peacemaking, it is more likely to draw on themes of evangelism, community, nonhierarchical leadership, and believers baptism," Kraybill says. "In England, almost everyone [interested in Anabaptism] is oriented to the cutting edge, where the church is on the margins in society. People are saying this is a structure for being church in a post-Christian society."

—*Tom Price*

Elections, recognitions highlight AAMA meeting

Hampton, Va.—Three new members were elected to the board of the African-American Mennonite Association (AAMA) during its biennial assembly, held Aug. 8-10 at Calvary Community Church.

The new board members were elected to three-year terms. They are: Kenyetta Aduma (Berean Fellowship) of Youngstown, Ohio; Brenda Freeman (Ninth Street) of Saginaw, Mich.; and Alvin Isaacs (Calvary Christian Fellowship) of Los Angeles, Calif.

Four outgoing board members were recognized for nine years of service on the board: Stan Maclin of Richmond, Va., William Irvin (Prince of Peace) of Los Angeles, Rose Covington (Rehoboth) of Saint Anne, Ill., and Maude Alexander (Mennonite Bible Fellowship) of New Haven, Conn.

The elections were the highlight of this year's assembly, according to board president Leslie Francisco III of Hampton, Va. He also noted that in the next year, the AAMA board hopes the organization can become more congregational. "We see a real need to establish links with congregations," said Francisco, referring to the 57 churches that are members of AAMA. "We're very interested in hearing from AAMA churches on how we can be more of a resource to them."

AAMA is one of four associate groups of the Mennonite Church General Board. The next AAMA board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 1-3.

- **Minn-Kota sale raises $90,000.** The 10th annual Minn-Kota relief sale to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) brought in more than $90,000. It was held in Sioux Falls, S.D., July 26-27. The sale of a House Against Hunger will add to sale proceeds, making the total money raised by 10 years of sales over $1 million. —*Mennonite Weekly Review*

- **MMA approves new plans.** The Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) board of directors gave final approval for a plan to offer investment choice to participants of Mennonite Retirement Trust. Participants will soon be able to choose how they want their retirement funds invested. The board also gave final approval for the development of an MMA Praxis International Fund and a plan to explore offering community-based services for older adults.

- **Nepal reunion held.** Nearly 75 present and past workers in Nepal attended the fourth Nepal reunion Aug. 2-3 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Board of Missions, the event included an update on current work in Nepal by Ed Metzler. Special recognition was given to Miriam Krantz, completing 33 years of service in nutritional work.

- **Interpretive center to open.** Illinois Amish Interpretive Exhibits, Inc., has plans to open an Amish information center in Arcola, Ill., in October. A permanent exhibit will detail the history and life of Amish people located between Arcola and Arthur, Ill., according to curator Stanley A. Kaufman. The center will also contain a bookstore, gift shop, audiovisual room, and gallery for changing exhibits.

- **Good wins award.** Howard Good, director of domestic economic development for Mennonite Economic Development Associates, was recently honored with a Leadership Award for his work as co-chair of the Grassroots Advisory Panel to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The panel represents 18 community-based organizations working with economic development and various social issues.

- **Record number enrolled.** Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School began its 55th school year on Aug. 26 with a record enrollment of over 825 students. New staff for the 1996-97 school year are Peter Dula, social studies, and Caryn Widrick, music.

Nightclub to church. *Philadelphia, Pa. (MCC)*—Angelo Naranjo stands outside his church, Comunidad de Amor (Community of Love), a former nightclub in Philadelphia, Pa. Naranjo is a Summer Service worker, part of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. program in which young adults from Hispanic, Native American, Asian / Pacific Islander, and African-American communities serve in their home churches and communities. This summer Naranjo is assisting with numerous programs in his church, one goal of which is to "clean up the neighborhood," says Naranjo's older brother, Juan. Naranjo leads a reading group for 35 neighborhood children. He also leads a Bible study with the children, helps to improve their reading skills, and teaches Spanish and English.—*Deborah Fast*

- **New appointments:**

David Graybill, sports information director, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. He continues as director of corporate and foundation relations.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Grace and Paul Brunner began Sept. 1 as interim pastors at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz.

Wallace Jantz began Aug. 13 as interim pastor at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan.

Barry Loop began ministry as senior pastor at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., on June 1.

Phil Slabaugh was installed as pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa, on July 14.

Dave Tiessen was installed as pastor of Mannheim (Ont.) Mennonite Church on June 23.

Peter Wiebe has ended a pastorate at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz.

- **Coming events:**

Dinner meeting of Clayton Kratz Fellowship Chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Franconia, Pa., Sept. 9. Howard Brenneman, president of Mennonite Mutual Aid, will speak on "Using Obstacles to Create Opportunities: A Case Study." Reservations and more information available from 215 721-3030.

"The Changing Face of Business: Ethnic Diversity, Women, Virtual Corporations, and Recycling," Greencroft Senior Center, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 12. Panel discussion sponsored by Michiana Mennonite Economic Development Associates. Reservations available from 219 537-4334.

"Story as Truth," lecture by author Madeleine L'Engle, College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 12. Sponsored in part by Goshen College. Tickets available from 219 535-7566.

"Spirituality and the Elderly: Issues for the 21st Century," Maple Lawn Homes, Eureka, Ill., Sept. 19. Katie Funk Wiebe will lead the all-day workshop. More information is available from 309 467-2337.

Convention of New York City Mennonite churches, Sept. 27-28. Theme for the weekend is "Preparing the Harvest." More information available from 718 652-2307.

Annual meeting, Region IV Mennonite Disaster Service, Lincoln Glenn Church, San Jose, Calif., Sept. 27-28.

Annual meeting, Franklin Mennonite Conference, Chambersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church, Oct. 6-7. Guest speaker is Myron Augsburger.

25th anniversary celebration, Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas, Tex., Oct. 12-13. More information available from 214 902-8141.

75th anniversary celebration, Gulfhaven Mennonite Church, Gulfport, Miss., Oct. 26-27. More information from 601 831-1720.

• **New books:**

Silver Thread: The Ups and Downs of a Mennonite Family in Mission (1895-1995) is a historical account of three generations of Mennonites serving first in East Africa and later in war-torn Central America. Written by Joseph C. Shenk, the book tells of the changes in how Mennonites approach mission. Available from Good Books, 717 733-7171.

• **New resources:**

Decide for Peace, a Bible study and reflection guide on conscientious objection for youth and adults, is now available. Order from Commission on Home Ministries, 316 283-5100.

• **Job openings:**

Attorney, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, Ind. Qualifications include degree from accredited law school, license to practice, and good standing with applicant's state bar association. Knowledge of health care industry, managed care organizations, and insurance products is preferred. More information is available from MMA at 800 348-7468.

Chief executive officer, Mennonite Home, Lancaster, Pa. Qualifications include at least five years leadership experience, preferably in health care operations, and communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills. Position available July 1, 1997. Send résumé and salary history to assistant administrator, 1520 Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601.

Director of degree completion programs, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include leading four-person staff to develop, market, and deliver effective programs, some teaching required. Qualifications include teaching and administrative experience in higher education. M.A. required, Ph.D. preferred. More information is available from John Nyce, academic dean, at 219 535-7503. Applications received until Sept. 30.

Faculty position in applied mathematics and computer science, Goshen (Ind.) College. Two-year position with possible extension begins January or August 1997. Graduate degree in applied mathematics or computer science required, doctorate preferred. Responsibilities include teaching introductory and advanced courses. Send a curriculum vitae and three professional references to John D. Nyce, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

Program director, Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich. Responsibilities include summer program coordination, retreat and special event development, and public relations. Bachelor's degree preferred, youth ministry experience helpful. Submit résumé and three references by Oct. 7 to Christopher Gill, Camp Friedenswald, 15406 Watercress Drive, Cassopolis, MI 49031.

Provost, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include coordinating offices of academic dean and dean of students, serving as chief executive officer in absence of president, directing annual budgeting process, and supervising other areas of academic program. Qualifications include teaching, scholarly, and administrative experience. Applications and nominations taken until Sept. 30. Position begins as early as Jan. 1, 1997 or as late as July 1, 1997. Send nominations and applications to John D. Nyce, interim academic dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

• **Change of address:**

Joe Miller, Mountain View Fellowship, HC 64 Box 162-F, Trout Run, PA 17771-9525.

Riding against the wind. *Clarksburg, W.Va.*—Grace Nolt (left) leads a small group of riders from the Wandering Wheels cycling group on a road between Clarksburg, W.Va., and Red House, Md. Nolt, a staff person for Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa., rode from Seattle, Wash., to Rehoboth Beach, Del., to raise money for Spruce Lake. As of Aug. 14, total contributions stood at $29,500, just $500 short of her goal of $30,000. A matching donor will equal all funds received up to $30,000.

Nolt's journey began on June 17 and ended Aug. 1. She rode with about 70 other people in the biking club, averaging 80-90 miles a day.—*David Hiebert*

NEW MEMBERS

Gulfhaven, Gulfport, Miss.: Troy and Joanna Farris.

Holdeman, Wakarusa, Ind.: Tammy Markham.

Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: Ralph and Joanne Caudel.

Lindale, Harrisonburg, Va.: Karen Eaton, Mark Horst, Michael Hershey, Welby Lehman, Janelle Leaman, Jason Miller, Emily Mullet, and Michael Swartley.

South Hutchinson, Kan.: Carrie Yutzy.

Tedrow, Wauseon, Ohio: Phil, Shirley, Trevor, Michele, and Jodi Crossgrove.

BIRTHS

Alderfer, Denise Detweiler and Steve, Sellersville, Pa., Benjamin David (third child), July 31.

Bishop, Brenda Gross and Michael S., Blooming Glen, Pa., Megan Elizabeth (third child), Aug. 11.

Chaffinch, Carol Benner and Mickey, Greenwood, Del., Matthew Drexel (third child), June 15.

Eichelberger, Renee Litwiller and Brent, Tremont, Ill., Amy Renee (third child), July 26.

Gerber, Lupe and Aldis, Mexico, Luis Daniel (first child), Aug. 3.

Harris, Noel Woodall and Duane, Greenwood, Del., Morgan Victoria (second child), June 16.

Horsch, Maria Rodriguez and Jon, Indianapolis, Ind., Samantha Isabella (first child), Aug. 5.

McBroom, Angie Lloyd and Ernest, Seaford, Del., Shelby Lynn (first child), July 12.

Mowery, Vicki Flaugh and Jeff, Goshen, Ind., Stephanie Lauren (fourth child), July 30.

Roth, Stephanie Kramer and Daryl, Waterloo, Ont., Lily Kramer (first child), July 31.

Schrock, Kelly and Jeff, Hutchinson, Kan., Marcie Laurece (third child), July 12.

Stutzman, Rita Cochran and Benjamin, Bentonville, Ariz., Haley Chantel (second child), Aug. 5.

MARRIAGES

DeJesus-Smith: Renee DeJesus, Haven, Kan. (Methodist), and Sean Smith, Inman, Kan. (South Hutchinson), July 27, by Howard Wagler.

Diener-Moyer: David Duane Diener and Joanna Elizabeth Moyer, Green Lane, Pa. (Salford), Aug. 10, by Michael and Joan King.

Dunham-Streit: Tina Dunham, Kouts, Ind. (Hopewell), and Andrew Streit, Aug. 10, by John F. Murray.

Dunn-Durst: Anthony Dunn, Camp Hill, Pa., and Michelle Durst, Lewistown, Pa. (Barrville), June 15, by Gerald Peachey.

Fransen-Landis: Sharon L. Fransen, Telford, Pa. (Normal), and Jeffrey K. Landis, Souderton, Pa. (Blooming Glen), Aug. 11, by David A. Stevens.

Gaff-Sabella: Cindy Gaff, Kouts, Ind. (Hopewell), and Jason Sabella, Evansville, Ind., July 6, by John F. Murray.

Haskins-Miller: Kevin Haskins, Iowa City, Iowa, and Melissa Miller, Kalona, Iowa (Kalona), Aug. 10, by Mick Murray.

Hoffman-Lind: Heather Hoffman, Kansas City, Kan. (Catholic), and Sam Lind, Hutchinson, Kan. (South Hutchinson), Aug. 10.

Klopfenstein-Nafziger: Timothy Klopfenstein, Wauseon, Ohio (Central), and Stephanie Nafziger, Wauseon, Ohio (Tedrow), Aug. 3, by Randy Nafziger (father of the bride) and Wilmer Hartman.

Leichty-Sedore: Deon Leichty, Crawfordsville, Iowa (Bethel), and Jo Sedore, Ames, Iowa (Great Commission), July 20, by Dave Bovenmyer.

Loss-Smucker: Teresa Loss, Kalona, Iowa (East Union), and Joe Smucker, Indianapolis, Ind. (College), Aug. 3, by Firman Gingerich and Phil Clemens.

Miller-Weaver: Peter O. Miller, III, Atlanta, Ga. (Episcopal), and Kristin Ann Weaver, Atlanta, Ga. (Harrisonburg), Aug. 3, by Steve Yoder.

Rhodes-Siemens: Mitchell Rhodes, Riverside, Iowa (East Union), and Heidi Siemens, Goshen, Ind. (Berkey Avenue), Aug. 3, by Michael Loss and Jane Dyck.

DEATHS

Bauman, Alta Yoder, 87, Leola, Pa. Born: April 14, 1909, to J. Harvey and Irene Hertzler Yoder. Died: Aug. 5, 1996, Lititz, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—sons: Charles, Lowell; brothers and sisters: Lauren and Morris Yoder, Mary Nice, Frances Smucker, Pauline Brunk, Helena Wells; 2 grandchildren. Predeceased by: James Groff Bauman (husband). Funeral and burial: Aug. 7, Warwick River Mennonite Church, by Gordon Zook and Daniel Smucker. Memorial service: Aug. 10, Groffdale Mennonite Church, by Timothy Herr and Curvin Buchen.

Hartman, Lester William, 76, Goshen, Ind. Born: April 8, 1920, Goshen, Ind., to Abram W. and Ada Hoover Hartman. Died: Aug. 11, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Arlene Pletcher Hartman; children: Marilyn Kohler, Sandra Miller, Roger, Gene; brothers and sisters: Lowell, Ira, Paul, Vesta Weaver, Doris Reinhardt; 11 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Donald Ray (infant son). Funeral and burial: Aug. 15, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, by Wes Bontreger and Clare Schumm.

Miller, Barbara C., 83. Born: July 29, 1913, Haven, Kan., to Clemen C.B. and Mattie Miller. Died: Aug. 5, 1996, Goshen, Ind., of heart failure. Survivors—children: Oleta Ballman, Willis, brothers and sisters: Eddie and Clemen Miller, Fannie and Odena Miller, Nettie King, Alice Miller, Katie Troyer. Predeceased by: Joe E. Miller (husband). Congregational membership: Bonneyville Mennonite Church. Funeral: Aug. 9, Griner Conservative Mennonite Church, by John F. Murray. Burial: Clinton Union Cemetery.

Miller, Michael, 32, Mancos, Colo. Born: Dec. 27, 1963, Wichita, Kan., to Maurice and Marilyn Miller. Died: May 12, 1996, Durango, Colo., in a kayaking accident. Survivors—parents; sisters: Michelle, Monica; grandmother: Clara Kauffman. Memorial service: Boulder Mennonite Church, by Steve and Susan Ortman Goering.

Nice, Mamie F., 88, Souderton, Pa. Born: April 22, 1908, Hatfield, Pa., to Harvey H. and Katie C. Freed Derstein. Died: Aug. 19, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of pneumonia. Survivors—children: Ralph D., Floyd D., Garrett D., John D., Pauline D. Price, Blanche D. Nyce, Linda D. Derstine; 29 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Garrett M. Nice (husband). Funeral and burial: Aug. 23, Souderton Mennonite Church, by David Greiser and Gerald Clemmer.

Slabaugh, Barbara Yoder, 83, Chesapeake, Va. Born: March 12, 1913, Chouteau, Okla., to Andrew and Sarah Yoder. Died: July 8, 1996. Survivors—children: Olin, Sharon Zook, Laura Zook; 7 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Joseph Slabaugh (husband). Congregational membership: Deep Creek Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: July 11, Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church, by Marvin Stutzman.

Stalter, Mae Ethel Gnagey, 53, Bay Port, Mich. Born: Aug. 5, 1942, Pigeon, Mich., to Orie and Lawanda Mae Dutcher Gnagey. Died: July 27, 1996, in an automobile accident. Survivors—husband: Darwin Stalter; children: Pamela O'Neil, Paula Tucker, Rodney; brothers and sisters: Ronald and Roger Gnagey; Joyce Fil, Kathryn Seibel; 3 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: July 31, Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, by Jay Miller and Luke Yoder.

Swartzendruber, Mabel M. Schrock, 80. Born: Jan. 29, 1916, Tuleta, Tex., to Daniel and Ida Aeschliman Schrock. Died: May 17, 1996, Pigeon, Mich., of cancer. Survivors—sisters: Leona Shetler, Priscilla Schrock. Predeceased by: Harvey Swartzendruber (husband). Funeral and burial: May 20, Pigeon River Mennonite Church, by Thomas Beachy and Luke Yoder.

Wortman, George E., 92, Belleville, Pa. Born: Sept. 21, 1903, Hickory Ridge, Mich., to James A. and Nellie E. Conklin Wortman. Died: July 31, 1996, Lewistown, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Ruth Saner Wortman; children: Donna Louise Gilmore, Roberta E. Furst, Nellie R., James F.; 6 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Beulah Mayer Wortman (first wife). Congregational membership: Barrville Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: Aug. 3, Lost Creek Mennonite Church, by Gerald Peachey and Elam Glick.

Workers begin assignments. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Twenty-five workers participated in the Aug. 6-16 orientation at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters here. Nine of them are affiliated with the Mennonite Church. They are:

Seated (left to right): Barbara Shelly, Evanston, Ill., health education worker in Matagalpa, Nicaragua; Nathan Shelly; LeVon Smoker, Ephrata, Pa., computer programmer in Akron, Pa.; Christine and Harold Wenger, Mt. Joy, Pa., country representatives in Maputo, Mozambique.

Standing: Rachel Shelly; Glenn Shelly, Evanston, Ill., community development worker in Matagalpa, Nicaragua; Cheryl Swartley, Sassamansville, Pa., staff associate for Mennonite Conciliation Service, Akron, Pa.; Terrence Jantzi, Harrisonburg, Va., community development worker in Bolivia; Tracy and Eric Stutzman, Salem, Ore., community development workers in Atbara, Sudan.

Newspaper

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'Here we are, Lord'

Ever tempted to discouragement about the church? Wonder why you continue on with a group so diverse, one with so many conflicts and disagreements? I found an antidote for my "church blues" this summer. I attended three district conferences.

That's right: the annual sessions of three conferences—those meetings that are supposed to be boring, run by old men in white shirts and out-of-date ties who keep a tight reign on what does or does not get on the agenda.

That's not what I found at the meetings of Pacific Northwest (June), Allegheny (July), and Iowa-Nebraska (August). True, there were a few white shirts and ties. But there were a great many more open collars (or none at all) beneath young faces on conference leaders. A growing number of these leaders are also women.

Yes, the business does sometimes get boring. But I also heard lots of laughter this summer, even during business. People listened to each other, disagreeing, sometimes intensely, but still listening. And while we don't strive for consensus anymore, I heard moderators say, "That's unanimous," after so many votes this summer that I'm beginning to believe there could be a new unity among us.

All this happens when the moderators can get the delegates settled down to business. That's becoming more and more difficult as coffee breaks get longer and longer. People stand and talk and talk and talk. This summer I saw moderators shouting, ringing bells, banging on pianos, blowing whistles, and even pounding two wood blocks together into a microphone to call delegates back to business.

Nor was the talk in these breaks just about the weather, the price of wheat, or golf scores. I overheard "God bless you, brother," "I'll be praying for you," and "God's been working with me" much more than I remember in the past.

Each of the conferences also gave quality time to worship—at least four one- to one-half hour sessions in two or three days. Nor were these your two-hymns-and-a-sermon-and-a-prayer services. We heard stories, participated in litanies, watched dramas, took in sermons, did exercises, laughed, and cried.

And sang. Ah, how we sang. Off the wall. From memory. Out of *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. We were accompanied by pianos, guitars, bongos, organs, tin whistles, flutes, banjos, violins, saxophones, and a host of other instruments for which I still don't have names.

But always, in every session, these fell silent at least once, and we sang in rich four-part harmony. (As I watched three MYF fellows from Shickley, Neb., grinning as they belted out the bass notes of "Wonderful Grace of Jesus"—*Hymnal: A Worship Book* # 150—I knew four-part singing is alive among us and will be well into the next generations.)

Another hymn we sang at all three conferences was "Here I Am, Lord," based on Isaiah's response to God's call. Watching the faces of those who sang, you could tell they were not doing so because # 395 in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* had been announced by song leaders or worship teams. Here was deep emotion as people attempted to get in touch with what God was calling them to do—and respond to it.

In all three conferences, these responses were more than internal nods to God. We did something concrete to show commitment. At Pacific Northwest, we snaked around the chapel at Western Mennonite School in a symbol of following Jesus. At Allegheny, we went from the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center meetinghouse to the ball field, singing "We Are Marching in the Light of God," and then blessed each other with, "Go in the ministry of Christ." At Iowa-Nebraska, we gathered at the front of Bellwood Mennonite Church and put our hands on a cross, committing ourselves to be ambassadors of the peace of Christ.

Is there a new mood among us? Is a new unity surfacing out of our diversity? I came away from these three conferences believing there could be. We seem to have an increased desire to know God's way. There's an air of expectancy, of anticipation, a sense that the Spirit might come with something new. "God will do a new work among us." If I heard that once, I heard it a dozen times. In sermons. In the hallways. Even in board reports. From Oregon through Nebraska to Pennsylvania.

This unity, this anticipation is a delicate gift of the Spirit. As we continue to meet together, may we nurture it with dialogue and prayer. And with song: "Here we are, Lord. . . . We will go, Lord."—*jlp*

September 10, 1996

"Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease, as for knowledge, it will come to an end. . . . Faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

A more excellent way:

Living out the reality: love is the greatest

Our faith is a statement of what we believe. Our hope looks to the future. But it is love for each other that truly defines who we are as disciples of Jesus Christ.

by John C. Murray

We live in a fractured and violent world. Nations are set against nations, cultures clash, political parties argue and bicker. Families split apart: husbands from wives, parents from children, sisters and brothers from one another. Conferences and denominations are fractured over the interpretation of Scripture and the meaning of membership. Congregations are divided over worship styles, building projects, and organizational structure.

Sometimes I get angry when I see all this division. Sometimes I despair. And sometimes I simply weep and lament the reality.

The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians was writing to a fractured congregation. He begins the letter with only a few pleasantries before acknowledging that one reason for his letter is the divisions among them. The congregation was divided over many issues. Members had chosen up sides and aligned themselves behind certain leaders. They were spiritually immature, fractured by the sin of sexual immorality, and arguing over matters of civil law, eating meat offered to idols, the appropriate amount

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

My vision for the Mennonite church (3):
A future with less structure and more dreams 6

MWC Travel Fund ready for India 1997 Assembly 9

Peace library to open in New York City 10

The "love chapter" is not about marriage. Paul wrote it to show us that there is a better way to deal with the divisive issues that find their way into the church.

of financial support for ministers, the practice of the Lord's Supper, and the use and expression of the gifts of the Spirit. There were misunderstandings between persons who were single, married, and formerly married.

In the first twelve chapters, Paul carefully works his way through each of these issues. He tries to help the church at Corinth think through each, and he prayerfully gives his own counsel and reflection on these things that were dividing the church.

After sharing his wisdom on these matters, Paul says, "But I want to show you a more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31). Then he launches into one of the most well-known, eloquent expressions of love, often called "the love chapter" —1 Corinthians 13.

Reading and preaching on this chapter is typically reserved for weddings. While there is appropriate application for marriage, Paul's intention was not to describe the relationship between a wife and a husband. Rather, Paul wrote these words with the intention of describing a more excellent way of dealing with the fractured reality of the Corinthian church.

Paul tells this church that the greatest spiritual gifts—wisdom and commitment—are worthless without love. He defines love in terms of what it is: patient, kind, rejoicing in truth, bearing, believing and enduring all things, never-ending. He defines love in terms of what it is not: envious, boastful, arrogant, rude, insistent on its own way, irritable, resentful. Paul explains that while knowledge and prophecy are limited, love is eternal.

Concluding this poetic statement he says, "Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three: and the greatest of these is love." Certainly faith and hope are essential, but if the church at Corinth was to overcome the divisions among them, love needed to be the greatest.

The fractured reality of our lives begs us to ask the question, "Which of these three do we believe and live out as the greatest?"

Faith is the statement of what we believe, the declaration of our understanding of truth. It is confidence and trust, assurance and conviction. In the midst of the fractured reality of life, faith is important.

When we give faith the greatest importance, however, we become most concerned about compliance, uniformity (which is different than unity), and thinking alike (which is different than being of one mind). We begin to believe that truth is dependent on our defense of it; that if we fail to defend the truth well, it will fail to be the truth. We start to believe that salvation comes by believing the right things, doing the right things, and having the right values. If someone expresses faith differently than we do, we defend, attack, and dismiss rather than listening, discerning, and learning. Have you ever engaged in an argument in which the other person starts appealing to "facts, knowledge, logic, and truth" statements? They make it clear that if only you knew everything as well as they do, you would understand that they are right. If you have engaged in this kind of argument, I suspect that you know what it feels like to be put down, ridiculed, and not respected or heard. You know the result of placing faith as the greatest.

Hope looks to the future and expresses what we want to become. It is our goals for maturing, healing wounds, and overcoming obstacles. The fullness of hope is the kingdom of God, eternal life, the end of sin, death, and the devil. In the midst of the fractured reality of life, hope is important.

But when we give hope the greatest importance, we begin to focus so much on the future that present needs and opportunities are secondary at best, forgotten at worst. We can become so focused on our heavenly hope that we neglect our calling here on earth. We can become so focused on the earthly hope of healing, peace, and justice that we become discouraged and depressed when it doesn't quickly become reality. We begin to believe that salvation is merely some distant experience which has little relevance for our present reality.

Have you ever engaged in an argument with someone who won't focus on the current reality? They say things like, "Oh, it will all work out," or "It probably won't make a difference anyway." Their arguments are based on speculation about the future. If you have engaged in this kind of argument, I suspect that you know what it feels like to not have your concerns taken seriously, your ideas and innovations flippantly dismissed. You know the result of placing hope as the greatest.

Love has to do with our relationships with others. It shapes the way we speak to and about others and guides our attitudes and actions.

When we put the greatest emphasis on love, we walk in relationship with other members of the body of Christ, recognizing the limited

nature of our faith, our knowledge, our hope, and our prophecy. We know that walking in relationship with those who are different than we are can help expand our limited understandings. We know that salvation is an act of unmerited, amazing grace offered out of the expression of God's great love for us.

Have you ever engaged in an argument with someone for whom love is of greatest importance? They are always the shortest arguments in the world. The other person stands before you full of patience and kindness, without envy or jealousy. They rejoice in the truth even if you are the one who proclaims it. They keep saying things like, "Tell me more. Help me to understand more fully." They speak the truth in love out of a quiet awareness that the truth and facts which they possess are only partial, like looking at a reflection in a worn-out mirror. They know that the hope to which they cling stems from only a partial prophecy. They know that while the truth will be the truth whether they vehemently defend it or calmly express it, love will only be love if they live it.

You just can't argue with people who believe and live that love is the greatest. You may have differences with these people and may often discuss these differences. But you are always aware that you are more important to them than any difference between you.

At Wichita '95, the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church adopted two very significant and important documents. A *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* seeks to define our faith. *Vision: Healing and Hope* seeks to define our hope for the future. The challenge before the church in a fractured world is to remember that, as important as these two documents are for the church, there is something which is even greater. God calls us to the more excellent way—living out the reality that love is the greatest.

John C. Murray is pastor of the Emma Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind., and cochair of the Integration Committee. He and his wife, Krista, have two children, Nathan and Joel.

When we put the greatest emphasis on love, we walk in relationship with the other members of the body of Christ, recognizing the limited nature of our faith, knowledge, hope, and prophecy.

"For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."
—Romans 13:11b-12, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Thanks to our local mail service, the July 23th and 30th issues of *Gospel Herald* arrived together. The juxtaposition of the lead articles in those two issues—***She Said 'Yes'! She Said 'Yes'!*** and ***The Place to Begin Mennonite Theology***—presents such a good balance of what meaningful Christianity is for me.

To say that "Jesus Christ is Lord" is right and full of impact as we are led to understand, but by itself that information could be cold and formal, although theologically correct. The other side of the coin is the image of God running around heaven and waving and shouting, "She said 'yes'! She said 'yes'!"

To walk with God is about a relationship, not a religion. But that relationship is not flippant. Thanks for a good balance!

Jonathan Beachy
Asunción, Paraguay

Consultations Asks If Mennonites Are Ready for a New Definition of Pastoral Leadership (Aug. 6). While I appreciated this report—particularly the content you reported from Gerald Gerbrandt's Bible studies—one correction.

Gerbrandt is not yet president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg. He is president-elect. He will become president in July 1997 with the retirement of the current president, John H. Neufeld. Gerbrandt is currently academic dean at CMBC.

David Brubacher
CMBC board chair
Vineland, Ont.

Consultation Asks If Mennonites Are Ready for a New Definition of Pastoral Leadership (Aug. 6). I resonated particularly with Duane Beck's statement in this report, "The definition of authority needs to be one of 'casting a vision and giving life to a group' rather than wielding power."

It is easy for a pastor to slip into a power mode when things do not go as he would like. Instead, a pastor should know and possess more of the nature of Christ, wherein is his power.

This power is demonstrated in a respect that is earned as he practices and exudes Christ's nature in ministry. To practice this nature requires one to be genuine, loving, vulnerable, and well aware of who he is so that he can minister to others.

Ross Goldfus
Lititz, Pa.

Thanks for the timely editorial, ***When the Church Won't Buy Your Computer*** (Aug. 6). It should be read and reread. Strong language is in order when speaking to and of those in our churches who insist on their own way when the body of believers has turned them down.

We must ask repeatedly, "How deep is my commitment to this community of believers?" And we must make sure we are not among the wreckers but among the builders of the church.

Maxine Miller
Wakarusa, Ind.

I am disappointed that I haven't found a report of the conference, "Dancing at the Table," in *Gospel Herald*. So here's a bit of my personal experience.

I met Jesus the Healer this summer at this conference at Manchester College during the last week in June. As the daughter of a gay father, I know all too well my church's contempt for anyone who isn't straight. While I have received understanding, comfort, and encouragement from individuals within the church, I have deeply needed the larger Mennonite body to welcome me, my family, and our many homosexual and bisexual sisters and brothers to Christ's table.

Each time the nearly 300 of us at the conference gathered for worship, I looked through tear-filled eyes, marveling at the movement of the Holy Spirit in dancing, songs of praise, stories, drama, and lamenting and celebrating.

The weekend empowered me to return to my congregation and to study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary with a spirit of hope instead of fear. I long for the day when I can study and pastor alongside my homosexual and bisexual sisters and brothers.

Teresa Dutchersmith
Elkhart, Ind.

Thank you for discussing using Mennonite as part of our church name ***Why Churches Do or Do Not Use the Word 'Mennonite,'*** (Aug. 20). We need more articles explaining what we believe and less of how much we are like everyone else.

The people of the world are looking for models of life which are embodied in the vision and principles on which we Mennonites stand.

Jay Oberholtzer
Lititz, Pa.

I was taught that humor should not be at the expense of other people. Unfortunately, the creator of Pontius' Puddle (Aug. 20) had the pleasure of poking fun at one particular U.S. political party. I could create a similar scenario using a politician from another party.

I become disheartened when I realize that most of our institutional leaders and professors promote only one political party and condemn those who have a different opinion as to the ideology that our country should follow. There is more than one viewpoint in the political realm; none of them is inherently good or evil.

I grow weary of being put down and laughed at by our institutional leaders, professors, and church periodicals because they think they are promoting a more godly political party—while insinuating that I am some right-wing, war-mongering fanatic.

Let us learn to laugh at ourselves. But not at each other.

Gary Krabill
Mifflintown, Pa.

After reading Valerie Weaver's editorial, ***This Business of Pretending*** (Aug. 20), I couldn't help but wonder when the last time Aslan's roar has been heard in the *Gospel Herald* office—or even in the larger Mennonite church.

Remember Aslan, that talking, flying lion from that silly land called Narnia; where beavers display wonderful hospitality, boys turn into dragons, mice sail ships, and children rule as kings?

I become disheartened when I hear individuals chastise others for wanting to enter another land where elephants fly, toads are lousy drivers, tea parties are held on a daily basis (except on your birthday), and a magic carpet is waiting to whisk one away to any place one could desire. To demonize such a place as a symbol of frivolity and "escapism" is misdirected and downright cruel to those of us who have chosen to live as little children.

After all, we worship a God who takes prophets on fiery chariot rides, appears as a cluster of wings, eyes, and wheels, whose spittle does wonders at clearing up blindness, and who instantly transports individuals to the seventh layer of heaven (wherever that is) for a quick look around. Surely we are no longer scared of talking snakes.

We are continually prodded to walk the treacherous path of the Samaritan, but how many times are we invited to take a stroll across the Sea of Galilee? The kingdom of heaven is only a wardrobe away, but only to those who enter in a spirit of play.

Now surely Disney will cost you $50, but once again the poor will always be with us. I realize I may have missed the spirit of this editorial, just as Weaver missed the spirit of Disney.

One last point: the language of Disney is not "collateral damage"; it's Bibbityboppityboo.

Brad Glick
Schwenksville, Pa.

A new phrase and concept seems to have entered Mennonite Church vocabulary. If a congregation decides that someone's testimony and behavior make the person ineligible for membership, we are now "dechristianizing" that person. A few observations:

1. Over the past generation or two, the Mennonite Church has radically changed its understanding of church discipline. Quite rightly, we have been concerned about some disciplinary patterns of the past (some of them all too real, but some of them also quite mythologized). However, in responding, we have mainly reacted rather than having a sustained and churchwide effort to discern how the New Testament, which clearly teaches discipline, would have us to practice it in our time.

2. The main reaction has been to create a simplistic picture about the terrible "era of the bishops." Now we have a new reaction: simply applying the label "dechristianization."

3. For those who believe in New Testament discipline, such discipline—even telling someone that there must be repentance or else one cannot be a member—is certainly not "dechristianization" because:

a. The concept is not that we are separating the person from God and God's people. Instead it is that the person has already done so in relation to our best efforts to understand what the New Testament teaches.

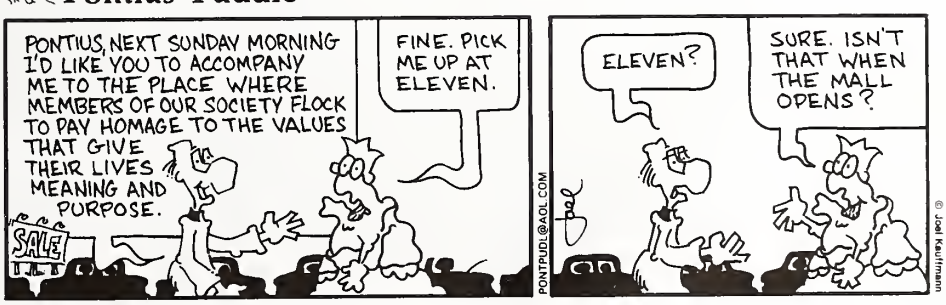
b. Far from "dechristianizing" the person, the purpose of true discipline is to christianize that person and others. That is because the ultimate aim is to help the person understand the nature of sin and to call the person to redemption. Even more, the purpose is to help keep the church's witness clear, again for the sake of humans' redemption. It is not redemptive simply to overlook and tolerate what separates persons from God and from faithfulness.

4. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot claim to teach regeneration and discipleship on the one hand and then operate ultimately with a laissez-faire policy on the other—which more and more seems to be our idea of Christian freedom. Of course, it would be wrong to have such radical concepts of discipline that we lost all idea of Christian freedom. And any discipline needs to be done with a great deal of love and pastoral sensitivity. But just as we dare not let discipline destroy truly Christian freedom, neither dare we let Christian freedom keep us from redemptive discipline.

5. The issue is deep and needs more churchwide discernment than it is getting. Certainly it is too involved to dismiss simply by pasting on a label.

Theron F. Schlabach
Akron, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle



My vision for the Mennonite church (3):

A future with less structure

To become the kind of church that manifests God's kingdom in this diverse and violent world, we must understand that we can no longer do business as usual.

by Steve Ratzlaff

Integration became a reality for me in the early 1970s. I hope that in the next ten years the same reality will dawn on all who fall within the boundaries of the merger of the Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC). I hope that we will recognize that the integration of our two bodies is the will of God and that we will commit ourselves to prayer and discernment as we merge.

I grew up in a GC church in Nebraska, but long before integration was ever on the table, I had already experienced integration personally. I joined Rainbow Mennonite Church, a dually affiliated congregation in Kansas City, Kan., in 1969, while doing my alternative service. I have been a member of a dually affiliated congregation ever since.

After joining the Rainbow congregation, I readily embraced my new commitment to the Mennonite Church by learning about its structures and ways of doing things. It took a change of attitude, however—one which caused me to look at things from an MC as well as a GC perspective.

Then change took place. In a few years, I truly became a "hybrid," both GC and MC, a true ecumenical Mennonite. My horizons were expanded, my commitment to God broadened, and my hopes for being God's church enlarged. I hoped, then, that I would see merger of these two groups in my lifetime. I worked diligently toward that end as a member of the Integration Exploration Committee on the West Coast while I was pastor of Seattle (Wash.) Mennonite Church. Last July at Wichita '95, I was moved to tears when the vote to merge was announced. I remember how important it was for me to participate in the communion service after the vote—a symbol of the joining together of MCs and GCs in spirit as well as body.

To become the kind of merged denomination that manifests God's kingdom in this diverse and violent world, we must understand that we can no longer do business as usual. It isn't enough to just make compromises—accept some GC ways of doing things and some MC ways. There may be better ways of making decisions than using GC or MC polity or even a combination of the two. In Isaiah 43, God promises to do a "new thing" in the lives of the people of Israel. "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" And as with the children of Israel, today God promises to do the same thing in the midst of the MC-GC denominations. Our tendencies are to "remember the former things"—old polities, traditional practices, and familiar committees. But God is about to do a new thing in our midst; "now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

If we are to accomplish integration, we will need a change of attitude: a change from an attitude that requires that everything go "my way" to one that puts God's will as the foremost goal. We need a change of attitude which enables us to live with the uncertainty that comes with change of structures and traditions and which leads to true discernment of God's will for this "united" Mennonite church. We will need to accept and welcome new cultures and races as an integral part of our collective being and readily embrace each other and look for ways to be God's "hands and feet" in this world. We cannot allow egos to get in the way or traditions to take top priority, but we must open ourselves to God and each other.

Only then will integration take place for each of us, personally. Only then will integration be a reality and merger complete.

Steve Ratzlaff is pastor of the First Mennonite Church of Lincoln, Neb., and president of the Northern District of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

by Ann Bender Moyer

The Mennonite church of my dreams is best described by the old Shaker hymn, " 'Tis the gift to be simple, / 'tis the gift to be free, / 'tis the gift to come down where we ought to be, / and when we find ourselves in the place just right / 'twill be in the valley of love and delight."

How can we begin to live in a valley of love and delight? I believe it can happen when we

and more dreams

become more simple followers of the Jesus we profess and when we look for what God is doing and join that action.

God invites us to dance to a tune of peace, justice, hope, healing, love, and freedom. Sometimes we'd rather study the issues than dance. We'd rather plan and organize, make resolutions, and take actions than follow the one who leads us to the heart of the human condition and transforms us in the process. The church needs to ask of itself the same questions Jesus asked. "Do you want to be made well?" assumes we're not yet whole.

How can the church be made well? By admitting brokenness, reflecting before strategizing, centering prior to producing, living in the city rather than saving the city, and building pockets of faithful people as vigorously as we build programs and organizations.

The Mennonite church has a personality. Dominated by a "servanthood" orientation, at its best it has become an efficient businesslike organization which gets things done. The focus, however, can too easily turn to ourselves and what we can accomplish. We would do well to listen more closely to the voices of artists and prophets—hopefully they're still in our midst. It's at least as important to ask, "What is God up to?" as to ask, "How are we doing?"

What might a church look like that asks these questions? One graphic example in process is integration. While we're at it, how about an integration of the whole Mennonite church into one simple organism? What if we didn't rely on each branch to do its own fundraising but sent all our money to one budget? What if we really believed that all healing is God's healing and displays the presence of Christ? Might we not need fewer pet projects and develop a more directed, cohesive, and simple way to use money? Might we not all understand better who our church is and what it does? Simplicity is of the essence in this new Mennonite church, so that the organizational structure can be understood by those who didn't grow up Mennonite.

When we came to San Diego, our tiny church wasn't sure what it should be, but there was no doubt it would be Mennonite. As a dual-conference church plant, our group of about a dozen members needed a Southwest Mennonite Conference (MC) representative, a General Conference representative, a Mennonite Mutual Aid representative, a mission communicator, a Mennonite Disaster Service representative—everyone could have a job just to relate to the larger Mennonite structures. We also needed someone to open and answer the mail from MBM, MBE, MBCM, COM, CHM, Mennonite Youth Census, *Mennonite Yearbook*, General Conference *Handbook of Information*, and on and on. Not only this, but someone needed to explain to us who all these groups were and how they were connected—or not. All of this was in addition to figuring out what was going on in our local community, where we could be involved, and how to nurture the lives of the spirits of those we minister to.

What a relief when our local conferences, Pacific District and Southwest, decided to integrate! There are now fewer meetings to attend and fewer schedules to juggle. With the decision of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church to unite, we in San Diego say, "Amen!" Now we can stop trying to explain the differences between Mennonites to those who have joined us just because they see a faithful attempt to follow Christ which happens to be called Mennonite. Perhaps the best way to describe the move toward integration is a journey toward healing;

In this issue, Gospel Herald *continues its series on vision for the church for the future. In this series, 24 Mennonite leaders write short essays giving specific ideas on where or how the Mennonite church should head into the future.*

Your response is welcome, both to the ideas presented in the series, or your vision for the church for the next 10 years. Please keep your responses short—no more than 150-200 words. They will appear in future issues in "Readers Say."

Send them to "My Vision," Gospel Herald, *616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683.*

E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com

—Editor

We would do well to listen to the artists and the prophets among us, realizing it is as important to ask, "What is God up to?" as it is to ask, "How are we doing?"

"We want to be made well, and God is doing just that."

Our little group, struggling to grow and longing for stability, must continue to ask, "What is God doing in San Diego? How can we dance the steps God is leading?" These questions force us to step outside our doors and identify God's work in much more than the building of the Mennonite Fellowship of San Diego. Because we're a young urban church with many people coming and going every year, we ask every six to twelve months, "Who are we and what are we to do?" It's tiring, and some of us get frustrated, but we need continually to discern direction and to build on the strengths in our midst.

While processing this question once again at our fall retreat, our resident linguist suggested maybe we should call our church "Manna," meaning, "What is it?" because we ask this question so often. That thought reminds me that though I often sigh this question, something comes from God and meets our needs again and again. And the focus moves again to what God is doing.

God's kingdom is built by our willingness to be vulnerable and to communicate openly and simply our dependence on God. The Shaker hymn continues, "When true simplicity is gained / to bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed. / To turn, turn will be our delight / till by turning, turning we come round right."

Ann Bender Moyer and her husband, Brad, are copastors at Mennonite Fellowship of San Diego, Calif. She also serves as assistant moderator of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference.

by Henry Poettcker

The actions taken by the two largest North American Mennonite groups—the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church—at the Wichita '95 assembly last summer have set in motion the plans for a merger. A priority item for our future together should be a simple yet comprehensive spelling out of the Mennonite church's mission and appropriate steps to reach that mission. The mission of the church of Jesus Christ encompasses the several enjoinders of the Great Commission: a worldwide undertaking of making disciples (evangelism), incorporation into the body of Christ (baptizing in the name of the triune God), and comprehensive Christian nurture (teaching them to observe all that Christ commanded).

Past discussions, both within our groups and between our groups, have not brought us to a common mind on how to best make disciples. We've said that evangelism into the whole world is a priority, but we haven't agreed on *how* to evangelize, nor on the basic ingredients of the "good news." That continues to be homework for us as we move together.

We're more agreed on the incorporation of our converts—those who respond to the proclamation of the good news. Yet once again we don't agree on how to interpret baptism, nor when it should rightly be administered. And our dialogue about the difference between baptizing those of no Christian background and children of Christian believers hasn't brought us to one mind.

And what is it that we teach new believers to obey? MCs and GCs basically agree on what we designate as Anabaptist principles: voluntary church membership, baptism on confession of faith of the recipient, the primacy of love and forgiveness leading to sharing and simplicity, and peace as part and parcel of the good news. But what else should we definitely include in this list?

Our task in the next ten years will be to undertake serious biblical study, to ascertain the meaning of the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to define the path of obedience. To do that adequately, we must accept each other as brothers and sisters in Christ without belittling another's faith. We must recognize the validity of each other's history, which has given us both a direction and a reason for seeking the path of obedience. We must challenge one another to faithfulness, recognizing that the price is commitment to the Christ and readiness to sacrifice. And we must be ready at every step to reach the consensus that affirms, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

May God give us the grace to adjust our polity, boards and commissions, and the structuring of our "new" conference to make the above possible.

Henry Poettcker, Winnipeg, Man., served as president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., from 1978-1990.

Costs for Calcutta:

MWC Travel Fund ready for India 1997 Assembly

Newton, Kan. (MWR)—With about $285,000 in Travel Fund contributions and pledges, Mennonite World Conference has about enough money to bring all delegates to MWC's India 1997 assembly in Calcutta in January. But more funds are needed to cover other costs related to the assembly.

North American conferences and congregations have given $135,000 to the Travel Fund, which will help pay for MWC delegates from churches in Third World countries to get to Calcutta. European conferences and congregations and contributions from India 1997 registrants have each added $20,000.

Funds from other sources—individuals, agencies, foundations—total about $110,000. That includes the "fair share" payments MWC member churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are making toward their own delegates' travel.

As of Aug. 16, 2,946 people had registered for India 1997, including about 1,056 from outside of India. Kathy Good, MWC director of administrative services, said the final registration total is expected to be at least 3,500.

Five hundred people from the United States had registered, 190 from Canada, 150 from Europe, 130 from Asia and the Middle East (non-Indian), 54 from Latin America, and 32 from Africa.

In addition to the 1,890 registered Indians, more Indians plus some Nepalese and Bangladeshis will participate in Assembly Scattered events throughout the region before and after Assembly Gathered Jan. 6-12.

About $240,000 in registration fees and unsolicited contributions has been generated for the Assembly Fund to cover costs within India. But MWC officials estimate in-country costs will range from $285,000 to $300,000. They are looking for another $60,000 for the Assembly Fund.

The last MWC assembly, held in Winnipeg in 1990, cost $2.3 million, about nine times more than the estimated costs for India 1997.

Additional costs. MWC also needs an additional $25,000 for its General Fund to cover additional costs incurred in its Strasbourg, France, and Kitchener, Ont., offices due to India 1997 planning.

In addition to the national delegates, MWC is accepting Travel Fund contributions to bring additional representatives from young churches to several India 1997-related events: Consultation on Theological Education on Five Continents, to be held Jan. 1-2, and Peace Council and Faith and Life Council, both to be held during Assembly Gathered.

Some Travel Fund contributions have been designated for specific purposes, such as to bring to Calcutta five African Bible school principals, four African women, and representatives from Vietnam and the former Soviet Union.

—*Rich Preheim*

International Mennonite history project slated

Strasbourg, France, (MWC)—In a new initiative to record Anabaptist history through non-Western eyes, the Mennonite World Conference executive committee approved the Global Mennonite History Project (GMHP) during its July meeting in the Netherlands.

The project will be launched at the 1997 MWC Assembly in Calcutta, India, with completion expected by Assembly 14 some six years later. John A. Lapp, who recently ended a term as executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee, was appointed project coordinator.

Collaboration necessary. "There is something foreboding about such an undertaking," says Lapp. "It will require the collaborative work of many minds and hearts."

Current census reports confirm that more Mennonites and Brethren in Christ now live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America than in Europe and North America. The project aims to generate insight about how the local church adds to the history of the world church.

The end product will integrate historical data on the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ movement in the major regions of the world, including transitions from missions to churches, practices of the Christian life and work of the church, inculturation of the church in specific settings, relations with other Christians and faiths, and unique contributions of these churches to regional Christian movements and the global Mennonite church.

Is it possible? Some expressed concern about the project. "For so long the missionaries and historians in Europe and North America have interpreted the rest of the world," said bishop Joram Mbeba of Tanzania. "Will it really be possible to listen to ordinary people in Africa and in Asia and in Latin America?"

Mbeba assured the committee that the project will be supported by national churches if the procedure facilitates local ownership and involvement.

—*Willard E. Roth*

Fun with fufu. *Cotonou, Benin (MBM)*—Rachel Hollinger-Janzen (left), daughter of Rod and Lynda, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers in Benin, makes mud fufu pies with her Beninese friend, Sandra. More appetizingly made with yams, fufu is a staple in the West African diet. Similar in texture to stiff mashed potatoes, fufu serves as a base food like rice, couscous, or potatoes in other cultures. Traditional Beninese cuisine recipes are available in MBM's new mission packet, "Benin: Giving God the Glory."

Books, books, and more books:
Peace library to open this month in New York

New York City, N.Y.—A peace and Anabaptist library, featuring over 1,000 books on themes of peace theology and its application, is scheduled to open at the end of September in Menno House.

John Rempel, pastor of Manhatten Mennonite Fellowship (MMF) where the library will be housed, says that the vision for such a library came from a sense that "an interest in the peace witness was always there [among Mennonites in New York City] but it never got much attention in terms of peace education."

A similar initiative for a peace resource center in New York City first developed in the early 1980s but never came to fruition. This second attempt, growing out of the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches with 18 member congregations, is lodged at Menno House, also home to MMF and the Mennonite Central Committee United Nations office.

Peace applications. A five-member committee is now working on the project and plans to open the library after the books are cataloged. Most of the current collection of books were donated by Gerald Studer, longtime minister in the Atlantic Coast and Franconia conferences.

The library committee is interested in obtaining books about Mennonites beyond North America, with a focus on Spanish publications. They would also like to add books centering on peace application, with topics ranging from international diplomacy efforts to neighborhood victim-offender reconciliation.

"We're trying to enthusiastically represent a Mennonite interpretation of the gospel but to make very clear that we separate that from an ethnic agenda," says Rempel, adding that a main goal of the committee is to make the library accessible to people of any background.

Audiences. The two audiences that the committee expects the library to serve are Mennonites in city congregations who have no other source of Mennonite-related books and people in local seminaries and United Nations-related agencies. The second group will be more difficult to reach, anticipates Rempel, but he is excited about offering this audience "a more academic presentation of nonviolence possibilities."

The Peace and Anabaptist Library received over $8,000 from the Mennonite Church General Board in 1994 and recently acquired a $3,000 grant from the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches.

—*Valerie Weaver*

The library welcomes inquiries from potential patrons and donors. Contact Peace and Anabaptist Library, c/o Menno House, 314 E. 19th St., New York, NY 10003.

Four Advent attitudes. *Scottdale, Pa. (MPH)*—This fall *Builder* magazine will publish outlines to help Mennonite congregations plan worship for the four Sundays of Advent (Dec. 1, 8, 15, and 22). The October 1996 *Builder,* cooperatively published by Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa., and Faith & Life Press, Newton, Kan., includes plans for banners that represent four attitudes toward God that are part of the watchful process in Advent: desperation (top left), waiting (top right), hope (bottom left), and acceptance (bottom right).

Writers for this year's Advent material come from several Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church congregations in northern Indiana: Leonard Beechy, Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau, Barbara Nelson Gingrich, Christine Guth, and Marilyn Voran. Marlene Kropf of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Elkhart, Ind., led the writers in an orientation that included group and individual Bible study of the Lectionary texts, contemplation, and individual retreat.

Canadian Mennonite Reporter:
Conference of Mennonites in Canada delegates support plans for magazine

Calgary, Alta.—Delegates of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC) voted to support a resolution combining *Mennonite Reporter* and *Nexus,* two Canadian Mennonite publications.

The vote occurred at the CMC 94th annual meeting here July 3-7.

Plans for one publication, tentatively named *Canadian Mennonite Reporter,* call for a new magazine to be in place by September 1997. *Mennonite Reporter,* published in Waterloo, Ont., operates by subscription, and *Nexus,* based in Winnipeg, Man., is sent to all CMC congregations.

Ron Rempel, editor of *Mennonite Reporter,* presented a prototype of the new magazine for review. He proposed a 40-page magazine published 24 times a year and a funding base that includes per-member grants from each participating conference.

Discussion centered on whether editorial freedom would be lost once the paper becomes an official conference publication. The proposal recognizes that area conferences need to speak to issues such as the name of the new publication and its financing.

Other business. Delegates also passed a resolution reemphasizing CMC's commitment to continue addressing issues of high unemployment and poverty in Native communities.

Ron Sawatsky of Waterloo, Ont., outgoing moderator of the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, was elected as new CMC moderator.

—*from reports in* The Mennonite *and* Mennonite Reporter

Hong Kong Mennonites look to 1997:
Political changes will affect the church

Glenn Kauffman, pastor of Hope Mennonite Church in Hong Kong, shares about the church during Festival 96 in Lancaster, Pa., as June Kauffman looks on.

Kowloon, Hong Kong (EMM)—A giant digital clock in Tiananmen Square, China, ticks down the hours remaining until Hong Kong will once again become part of the People's Republic of China.

At the stroke of midnight on June 30, 1997, Great Britain's 99-year lease on the small island territory at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta will expire, changing the lives of its six million inhabitants, including a body of Mennonite believers.

Glenn and June Kauffman, with their daughter Lia, serve the Hong Kong Mennonite churches in church planting and leadership. They are representatives with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), Salunga, Pa.

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The anxiety about personal welfare is deep among many Hong Kong citizens, Glen Kauffman says. Recent estimates indicate 1,000 citizens are emigrating each week. Some say that one in four of the Christians are likely to emigrate.

This brings a need for patience among a church that does not seem to be progressing very fast. On any given Sunday, about 100 people worship in the three Mennonite churches in Hong Kong, Agape, Grace, and Hope.

Grace Mennonite Church, pastored by Daniel Ngai, the only ordained Mennonite Chinese pastor, struggles to maintain its membership. While new people are entering the church, the inner core of Canadian-educated deacons and other leaders are leaving for futures in Canada or Australia, the two most open countries to Hong Kong emigrants.

In a city of six million people, Kauffman estimates that only 4 percent worship regularly in a Protestant church. The church has been attempting to evangelize, partly through offering English classes. Several Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams have helped to teach English.

How will the political change in 1997 affect the church? "Nothing will happen on that day or that year," projects Kauffman. "The date to watch is not July 1, 1997 [when China takes over]," says Kauffman, "but rather a date sometime after that, yet unknown, after the international media has forgotten Hong Kong and the human rights watchers in Britain and the USA have turned their attention elsewhere."

The Mennonite churches in Hong Kong have recently changed to cell-based churches. Kauffman has helped to develop materials and train cell leaders.

He says the change in church structure is not caused by fear that communist China will persecute the church but because members simply believe "we can do better, and we think some answers lie in cell groups."

Kauffman has encountered some people who feel they cannot become Christians because their job requires them to work on Sundays, when most church services are held. The average Hong Kong work week in 1995 was 54 hours. Cell churches provide a different dynamic and time commitment from Sunday morning worship services.

Kauffman, who pastors at Hope Mennonite Church, says that some believers would choose attending cell group over attending a traditional church service. Many believers in the three Mennonite churches are younger people. Senior adult believers have not been raised in the church; they come because their children bring them.

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Kauffman explains that Hong Kong may continue to operate its internal affairs for the next 50 years. Yet, many citizens of Hong Kong have lost trust in China after the Tiananmen Square incident of June 4, 1989. The following day, one million Hong Kong citizens (one-sixth of the population) protested on the streets.

"I feel we need to pray seriously about this [1997] as the transition happens," says Kauffman. "The church is planning to be a dynamic witness, even after 1997."

Kauffman believes that Hong Kong churches must prepare for increasing opportunities to minister in China, as relations between the two areas open up.

The work in Hong Kong is a joint effort between EMM and Commission on Overseas Missions of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

—*Carol L. Wert*

The view of Hong Kong from Victoria Peak, with Hong Kong Island in foreground and Kowloon in background. Located at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong is often called the "gateway to China."

'At the bottom of the social heap':

Women in the Philippines caught in low-paying jobs in 'special free-port zone'

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Is an inexpensive dress a good thing? Three years ago, before going to the Philippines as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer, Cheri Peele would have said yes. Now she would ask a few more questions.

In 1993 Peele went to Olongapo to work with women involved in the sex trade that had catered to U.S. servicemen in the Philippines. But Peele found that although the U.S. bases are now closed, the world economy is creating new hardships for women formerly caught in prostitution, women who remain "at the bottom of the social heap."

Bases closed. Peele completed her assignment this summer, convinced her work for justice must continue in North America.

Most of the seedy hotels, bars, and massage parlors that once lined Olongapo's streets are boarded up now. Following the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo and a Philippine Senate vote not to renew the bases' lease, the United States closed all its Philippine military bases by November 1992. In the early 1990s some 16,000 bar women were active in Olongapo; now there are fewer than 500. Women who remain—mostly in their late 30s or older, with no spouses, and children to support—have difficulty finding jobs that pay adequate wages.

The former U.S. Subic Bay base near Olongapo is now a "special economic and free-port zone" that offers tax breaks and other concessions to entice foreign companies—manufacturing everything from shoes to telephone parts—to locate here. From 1991-1995 Buklod, the organization with which Peele worked, offered sewing classes to prepare former bar women for the new jobs that would come to the area. (Buklod was started in 1987 by MCC and several Philippine groups to assist women in the sex industry.) More than 80 women attended three-month classes in basic sewing at Buklod; some also attended high-speed sewing classes.

However, the women trained by Buklod are having difficulty getting hired. When the women apply for jobs, they discover factory owners prefer younger women whom they view as more dexterous and easier to exploit.

Changing lifestyles. Peele did a feasibility study to see if Buklod could help the women set up their own factory. She studied local markets and discovered if the women were to buy cheap cloth from China to sew into simple dresses to sell locally, they might have a viable business.

This experience has changed Peele's outlook on shopping here at home. "Before when I went to the mall and saw something on sale, I'd think, 'Great, I can save money.' Now when I see something that seems too cheap, I feel torn about buying it," Peele says. "If I look at the tag, I'm sure to see it's made in the country with the current worst labor practices. The location keeps changing because companies shift their factories to wherever they can earn the most profit," Peele continues. "I know when I buy I'm supporting these practices and contributing to lost jobs here at home."

Cheri Peele

To change this situation, says Peele, means to "change our lifestyles. We may feel we have no control over how much workers are paid in the Philippines, but we can ask questions about our spending habits. After all, the flip side of production is consumerism."

—*Pearl Sensenig*

Conflict seminar prepares for European assembly

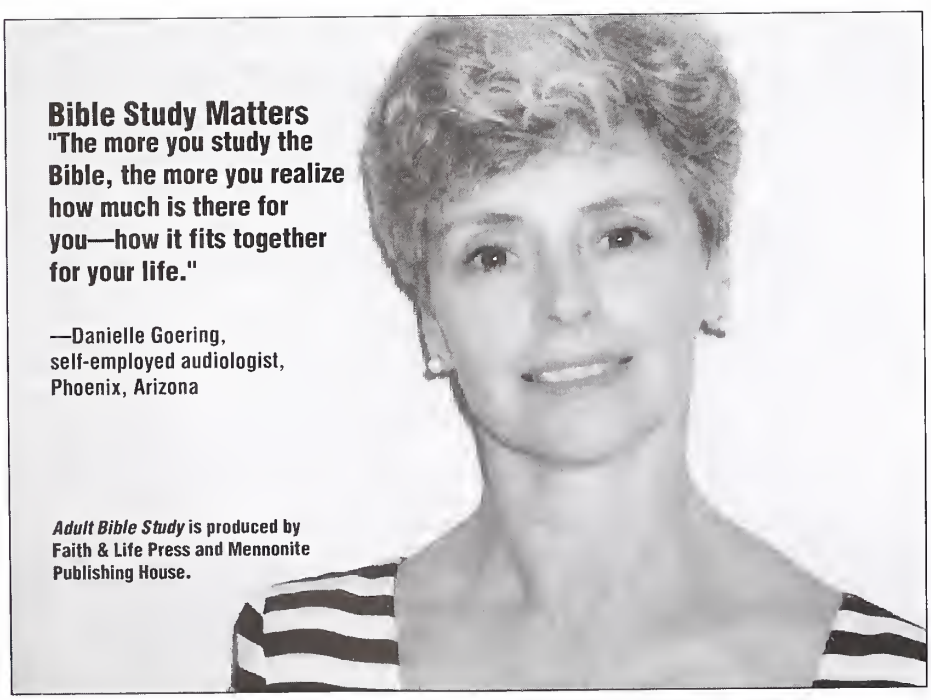
Strasbourg, France—The Brussels Mennonite Center recently took part in a weeklong training for youth workers on the themes of violence, mediation, and reconciliation.

Juan José Romero represented the Brussels Mennonite mediation center at the Strasbourg gathering, one of numerous events organized in preparation for the Second European Ecumenical Assembly scheduled for June 1997.

Thirty participants of 11 nationalities shared stories of violence in their countries and responses to it.

"The approach was one of putting one's thoughts into order, setting some points of reference, more than one of offering a large variety of tools. Each situation of conflict is unique."

"Reconciliation, a gift from God, source of new life" is the theme of the next year's assembly, to take place in Graz, Austria. Planned by the European Conference of Churches and the European Bishops' Conferences, the first assembly was held in Switzerland in 1989.—*from* Demicres Nouvelles d' Alsaco, *translated by Jean Gerber*



Thirty-two workers enter YES in six countries. *Baltimore, Md. (EMM)*—Thirty-two young adults completed a three-month Youth Evangelism Service (YES) training at the Baltimore Discipleship Center and left for outreach in August. Teams will serve four months in Kenya and Mexico City, and eight months in Brazil, Canada, France, Mexico (Sinaloa), and Sweden.

Front row on floor (left to right): Lori Snyder (Sinaloa), Shannon Lapp (Mexico City), Maria Hurst (Canada), Geanina Petruta (Sweden—team leader).

Second row, seated: Joel Ngarama (Kenya—team leader), Natalie Duckham (France), Tara Hershberger (Sweden), Nelson Okanya (Kenya), Sheila Seigrist (France), Krista Schlabach, Rose Fritz, and Jaqueline Okeyo (Kenya).

Third row, standing: Linda Vesey (Sinaloa), Melissa Meserole and Doreen Ebersole (Sweden), Kendra and Randy King (Sinaloa—team leaders), Kevin and Jenny Weaver (Canada—team leaders), Cari Friesen (Brazil), Melissa Stutzman (Mexico City), Priscilla Chun (Canada).

Back row, standing: Jason Eash (Mexico City), Andrew Bornman and Rodney Brenneman (France), Dan Hollinger (Mexico City), Cara Kruger and Joe Willems (Brazil), Lee Landis (Mexico City—team leader), Micah Yoder (Sinaloa), Martha Enns (Brazil—team leader), Ramiro Racey (Brazil).

- **GMC begins estate work.** The Ghana Mennonite Church (GMC) will begin estate development in the Ga district of Accra in October. The project begins with a $165,000 endowment fund from Mennonite World Conference. Isaac Quartey, GMC clerk, says that church members are having difficulty finding housing in the overcrowded city. Quartey hopes the project will be successful and extend to other parts of the county.—*G.B.K. Owusu*

- **Center changes name.** The Baltimore YES Center of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Atlantic Coast Conference is now the Baltimore Discipleship Center, according to Dave Harnish, program administrator for Discipleship Ministries at EMM, Salunga, Pa. While the Center focuses primarily on three-month Youth Evangelism Service trainings, other types of short-term trainings have been held there over the past few years.

- **WSSY reunion held.** Past and present participants, board members, and coordinators of the Washington Study-Service Year (WSSY) program of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., met on Aug. 3 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the program. The extension program that combines internships, classes at University of Maryland, and community living for college students in Washington, D.C., began in 1976 in a former Voluntary Service house on South Dakota Avenue.

- **Correction.** The name of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference moderator was spelled incorrectly as Phil Shenk on page 9 of the Aug. 27 issue of *Gospel Herald.* His name is spelled Phil Shank.

- **New appointments:**

Barry Stoner, director of the Baltimore (Md.) Discipleship Center of Eastern Mennonite Missions and Atlantic Coast Conference.

Trina Stutzman, women's basketball coach, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Ruth-Anne Wideman, women's volleyball and softball coach, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Phil Slabaugh was licensed as pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa, on July 14. Elno Steiner preached the installation sermon and Noah Kolb led the licensing service.

John Zimmerman was licensed and installed as pastor of Rocky Ford (Colo.) Mennonite Church on June 16. Don Rheinheimer led the service.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Cindy and Mike Brislen, with Jessica and Jordan, returned to Djibouti on Aug. 17 after a one-year home leave. They began a four-year assignment with Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Sharon Buckwalter returned to the United States in August after a one-year term in Lithuania with EMM. Her address is 1517 Main St., East Earl, PA 17519.

Ann and Jerry King-Grosh, with Kent, Hana, and Kate, returned to Ethiopia on Aug. 23 after a three-month home leave. They began a three-year term with EMM and Mennonite Central Committee.

Bruce and Joyce Heckman, with Nathan, Elisa, and Andrew, began a three-year EMM assignment in the Middle East on Aug. 18 after a two-month home leave.

John Hertzler went to Honduras in August to begin a three-year term with EMM.

Doug Hoover returned to the United States on Aug. 9 after an EMM term in Belize. His address is 207 Lauschtown Rd., Denver, PA 17517.

Pat and Rad Houmphan, with Rachel and Philip, left for Thailand on Aug. 26 for a three-year assignment with EMM and Commission on Overseas Mission.

Daniel and Laurie King, with Beatrice and Zachary, left in August for Nairobi, Kenya, where they began a three-year EMM term.

James and Lori Leaman, with Jordan, left for Nairobi, Kenya, in August, for a two-year assignment with EMM.

Areta Lehman left for Shirati, Tanzania, on Aug. 29, beginning a three-year EMM assignment.

Helen and Larry Lehman began a three-year EMM assignment in Guatemala in August.

Stuart Mast began a one-year assignment in Moldova in August with EMM and Cross Links.

Ed and Joan McManness, with Joshua, Laura, and Ian, began a two-year EMM assignment in Indonesia in August after a five-month home leave.

Jill and Tom Miller, with Sara and Elizabeth, began a one-year EMM term in Tirana, Albania, in August.

Nancy Murray returned to France on Aug. 30 after a two-month home leave. She began a three-year EMM assignment in Longwy.

• **Coming events:**

Teleconferences for clergy and church workers, sponsored by Philhaven, Mt. Gretna, Pa., Sept. 19, Nov. 14, Jan. 9, 1997, and March 27, 1997. "Pastoral and Clinical Collaboration in Mental Health Care" is the focus. The teleconference is relayed to locations in Pennsylvania, Florida, Iowa, Virginia, and Ontario. Registration is available from 800 308-6030.

"American History Through the Eyes of Peace," an eight-session noncredit course at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., Sept. 19-Nov. 14. Students will read, critique, and offer revisions of eight chapters of *The Missing Peace: The Search for Nonviolent Alternatives in American History* by James Juhnke and Carol Hunter. More information available from 316 284-5285.

Menno Simons 500th anniversary concert by Camerata Trajectina, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School Fine Arts Center, Sept. 21. The Dutch early-music ensemble will present music and Piet Visser, writer, professor, and curator, will lecture on "A Mennonite Share in the Dutch Culture of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." Tickets and more information from Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 717 393-9745.

MCC Bike Ohio, weekend bike tour based at Camp Luz, Oct. 4-6. Benefits Mennonite Central Committee. More information and registration available from 330 264-5579.

Women and preschool annual assembly, Witmer Heights / First Deaf Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 7. Resource for Lancaster and Atlantic Coast Conference churches with programs for women and preschoolers. Marilyn Kurtz, deaconness at New Danville Mennonite Church, will give the keynote address. Information and registration available from 717 687-7353.

Friendship Community 24th anniversary banquet, New Holland, Pa., Oct. 25. Jep Hostetler will speak on "The Joy Factor." Tickets and more information are available from 717 656-2466.

125th anniversary celebration, Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., November. The month-long celebration includes a Music Sunday, Homecoming Weekend, Missions Sunday, and Challenge Sunday. More information is available from 219 293-0377.

• **New books:**

Menno Simons: Confession and the New Birth, translated by Irvin B. Horst, mark Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Historical Society's contribution to international Menno Simons 500th anniversary commemorations. The volume of excerpts of writings by Simons is number five in the Mennonite Sources and Documents series. Available from 717 393-9745.

With Our Own Eyes by Don Mosley with Joyce Hollyday is the story of Christian responses to war, racism, and oppression. The book focuses on the work of Christians from Jubilee Partners in Comer, Ga. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

• **New resources:**

Decide for Peace, a Bible study and reflection guide on conscientious objection for youth and adults, is now available. Order from Commission on Home Ministries, 316 283-5100.

• **Change of address:**

Brenda and Phil Slabaugh, 1246 Gabriel Ave., Wayland, IA 52654.

Hispanic Mennonite Convention, 24 N. Roberts Ave., PO Box 125, New Holland, PA 17577.

NEW MEMBERS

Chestnut Ridge, Orrville, Ohio: Jim Alderfer, Naomi Alderfer, and Willis Kanagy.

Community Mennonite Fellowship, Milton, Pa.: James O'Connell.

East Union, Kalona, Iowa: Tim Yoder.

Fredericksburg, Va.: Chris and Babs Armentrout.

Grand Marais, Mich.: Sonya Bontrager and Erin Hughes.

Lockport, Stryker, Ohio: Mark Short.

Mannheim, Ont.: Carman Albrecht, Carolyn Albrecht, Allan McNaughton, Bonnie Lauber, Andrew Bearinger, Trisha Robinson, Elizabeth Fraser, and Dave and Janice Tiessen.

Marion, Chambersburg, Pa.: Samuel Troyer, Betsy Troyer, Clarence Bauman, Marian Bauman, Barbara Benner, John Benner, Arlan Crider, Kathy Crider, Dean Pool, and Mike Shank.

Perkiomenville, Pa.: Jeff and Joanne Gehret, Diana Hackman, Jan and Becky Landis, Elizabeth Lynds, Connie Reed, Art and Judy Trumbore, and Jenni Moyer.

Whitestone, Hesston, Kan.: Wallace Jantz and Sylvia Jantz.

BIRTHS

Blank, Norma Lehner and Marcus, Chambersburg, Pa., Kristen Joy (second child), Aug. 20.

Bock, Deanna Grant and David, Elmira, Ont., Abigayle Olivia (second child), May 23.

Coressel, Lori Beck and Jeff, Archbold, Ohio, Alexa Rae (third child), Aug. 11.

Denlinger, Alica Shenk and James, Lancaster, Pa., Eric James (first child), May 5.

Irving, Erika Dreher and Shane, Salem, Ore., Jonas Michael (first child), July 22.

Jonas, Kim Niziol and Greg, Mississauga, Ont., Ethan Scott (first child), July 22.

Leinbach, Mary Lou Aguilar and Terry, Newton, Kan., Erika Lynn (second child), Aug. 17.

Reigner, Beth Hershey and Jason, Sinking Spring, Pa., Natalie Mae (fourth child), June 25.

Short, Sue Bliss and Stan, Archbold, Ohio, Gabriel Christopher (third child), Aug. 19.

Stoltzfus, Christina and Chester, Fredericksburg, Va., Trudy Estrelita (fifth child), July 23.

Yoder, Joan Gotwals and Terry, Leola, Pa., Alyse Gotwals (first child), born Jan. 18, received for adoption Aug. 5.

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Mennonite Foundation 800 348-7468

MARRIAGES

Bauman-Mullet: Chad Bauman, Souderton, Pa. (Line Lexington), and Jodi Mullet, Mt. Hope, Ohio (Berlin), Aug. 17, by Lowell H. Delp.

Benson-Nofziger: Michael Benson, Archbold, Ohio (Central), and Laneé Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio (Central), Aug. 10, by Cliff Brubaker.

Blosser-Crossgrove: Patricia Blosser, Wauseon, Ohio (Central), and Ronald Crossgrove, Archbold, Ohio (Central), Aug. 17, by Homer Yutzy.

Cooper-Martin: Julie Cooper, Elmira, Ont. (Elmira), and Paul Dale Martin, Elmira, Ont. (Elmira), June 15, by Dale Bauman.

Gertz-Hershberger: Christopher James Gertz, Millersburg, Ohio (Walnut Creek), and Kristina Kay Hershberger, Sugarcreek, Ohio (Walnut Creek), Aug. 10, by Ross A. Miller.

Litwiller-Siomos: Kent Litwiller, South Bend, Ind. (Hopedale), and Alyssa Siomos, Mishawaka, Ind. (United Methodist), July 27, by Jack L. Thompson.

Nafziger-Yoder: Brad Nafziger, Archbold, Ohio (North Clinton), and Valerie Yoder, Pettisville, Ohio (North Clinton), Aug. 17, by Gary Blosser.

Plein-Wideman: Jim Plein, Elmira, Ont. (Elmira), and Sharon Wideman, Elmira, Ont. (Elmira), June 28, by Dale R. Bauman.

DEATHS

Bergey, Lowell R., 54, Telford, Pa. Born: Nov. 11, 1941, Doylestown, Pa., to Harvey G. and Ruth D. Rush Bergey. Died: Aug. 12, 1996, Telford, Pa. Survivors—brothers: Harvey Dean, Paul Marlin, Sr. Funeral: Aug. 15, Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse, by John M. Ehst and Steven E. Landis. Burial: Franconia Mennonite Cemetery.

Brubacher, Elias B., 77, Elmira, Ont. Born: July 25, 1918, Elmira, Ont., to Levi and Amanda Brubacher. Died: June 11, 1996, New Hamburg, Ont. Survivors—wife: Elizabeth Knarr Brubacher; children: Mary Kuepfer, Gladys Brubacher; brother and sisters: Amos, Linda, Susanna Weber; 8 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 14, Elmira Mennonite Church, by Dale Bauman and Ruth Anne Laverty.

Brubacher, Salome Martin, 81, Elmira, Ont. Born: Aug. 14, 1914, Twp. of Peel, Ont., to Isaac and Sarah Sittler Martin. Died: June 7, 1996, Cambridge, Ont. Survivors—husband: Ezra Brubacher; children: Glenn, Doris Brubacher, Ray, Paul, Fern Shantz, James, John; brothers and sisters: Noah, Milton, Irvin, and Melinda Martin, Sarah Horst, Mary Ann Bowman, Edna Weber; 18 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: June 10, Elmira Mennonite Church, by Ruth Anne Laverty and Dale Bauman.

Ebersole, Gladys E. Martin, 88, Chambersburg, Pa. Born: June 5, 1908, Sterling, Ill., to Henry E. and Clara Williams Martin. Died: Aug. 11, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa. Survivors—children: Clair E., Sarah Louise Diller; 7 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lehman Ebersole (husband). Funeral: Aug. 18, Menno Haven Chapel, by Jerry Roth. Burial: Chambersburg Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Espander, Martha E. King, 76, Pueblo, Colo. Born: June 5, 1920, West Liberty, Ohio, to Amos Lester and Elsie Detweiler King. Died: Aug. 17, 1996, Pueblo, Colo. Survivors—brother and sister: Herman King, Helen Yousey. Predeceased by: Otto Espander (husband). Funeral: Aug. 20, Pueblo Mennonite Church, by David Foncannon. Burial: Mountain View Cemetery.

Good, Lu Ella Mae Conrad, 93, Eureka, Ill. Born: May 8, 1903, Wayland, Iowa, to Peter and Amelia Orendorf Conrad. Died: May 20, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivors—children: Willard, Ellis, Violet Stalter, Dolorez Roth, Bernelle Kanagy, Leland, Loren; brother and sisters: Maynard Conrad, Wilda McGinnis, Elma Farvin. Predeceased by: Ivan S. Good (husband). Funeral: May 24, Dewey Mennonite Church, by Neil Houser. Burial: East Bend Memorial Gardens.

Miller, Dale Dallas, 71, Milford, Neb. Born: Dec. 22, 1924, Milford, Neb., to John and Lena Hauder Miller. Died: Aug. 16, 1996, Milford, Neb., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Betty Troyer Miller; children: Todd, Amy Bellefeuille, Layne; brothers and sisters: Earl, Roland, Vyral Vannoy; 4 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Nancy Lee (daughter). Congregational membership: Beth-El Mennonite Church. Funeral: Aug. 19, Bellwood Mennonite Church, by John C. King. Burial: Blue Mound Cemetery.

Miller, Tom F., 85, Sugarcreek, Ohio. Born: May 4, 1911, Holmes County, Ohio, by John C. and Clara Zaugg Miller. Died: July 28, 1996, Millersburg, Ohio. Survivors—children: Phil, Rose Ressler; 2 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Mary Miller (wife). Funeral and burial: July 31, Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, by Ross A. Miller.

Naffziger, Phoebe Emma Schroeder, 71, Harper, Kan. Born: June 25, 1925, Newton, Kan., to David and Emma Flickner Schroeder. Died: June 29, 1996, Wichita, Kan. Survivors—husband: Roy Naffziger; children: Delaine Moncado, Martha Ediger, Ronda Gonzalez, Dorothy Cloud; brothers and sisters: Ralph and Lester Schroeder, Hulda Georing, Viola Stucky, Mable Schmidt; 10 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: July 3, Crystal Springs Mennonite Church, by Verron Whitmore.

Peachey, Ruth E. Ackerman, 87, Belleville, Pa. Born: March16, 1909, Hoboken, N.J., to Charles and Emily Pickerell Ackerman. Died: Aug. 19, 1996, Belleville, Pa. Survivors—children: Orpha Ellen Jean, James M. Kanagy. Predeceased by: Orrie G. Peachey (second husband) and Jacob Kanagy (first husband). Funeral: Aug. 23, Valley View Haven Chapel, by Phil Barr and Paul Bender. Burial: Allensville Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Roth, Elsie Arlene Swartz, 58, Phoenix, Ariz. Born: June 27, 1938, Au Gres, Mich., to Roy and Katie Knepp Swartz. Died: Aug. 16, 1996, Phoenix, Ariz., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Leonard Roth; children: Karen Leichty, Ken; brothers and sisters: Ron, Dale, and Dewaine Swartz, Marilyn Joyce Miller; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 20, Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, by Dennis Stauffer. Burial: Rest Haven Cemetery.

Weber, Adeline Martin, 91, Conestogo, Ont. Born: July 24, 1904, Twp. of Woolwich, Ont., to Henry B. and Lovina Bauman Martin. Died: June 20, 1996, Elmira, Ont. Survivors—children: Beatrice Snyder, George and John Weber; brother: Abner B. Martin; 16 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Angus S. Weber (second husband), Amos S. Martin (first husband) and Walter Martin (son). Funeral and burial: June 23, Elmira Mennonite Church, by Dale Bauman and Ruth Anne Laverty.

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In praise of middle-aged farmers:

What keeps the church going

Aquila and Priscilla are two persons I'd like to have met. While they don't figure all that prominently in the story of the early church, they're there: undergirding, supporting, sometimes correcting, always encouraging.

We meet them first in Acts 18, where they take Paul into their house and together make tents. This couple risked their lives for Paul at one point (Rom. 16:4). When another evangelist came to town preaching an incomplete gospel, they took it upon themselves to correct him (Acts 18:24-26). Evidently they also operated the first house church (Rom. 16:5, 1 Cor. 6:19).

I can't read about Aquila and Priscilla without concluding they were two who made possible the ministry of the apostle Paul. And they appear to have provided the stability, the selflessness, and the energy by which any group of believers becomes a church.

Priscilla and Aquila continue to be among us today.

You can meet them on the West Coast in the form of Sam and Roma Eicher, Albany, Ore. Those who attended Oregon 91 at Eugene will remember them as the local coordinators, scurrying about with walkie talkies, working out conflicts, solving problems, and making sure things went as scheduled.

It's good the Eichers are farmers. I'm not sure anyone else could have made a Mennonite General Assembly work using the facilities of a state fairgrounds. The Eichers did, as smoothly as though we had been at a convention center.

This summer I found the Eichers at it again. They helped bring off a 50th anniversary celebration for Western Mennonite School, Salem, in June. Two weeks later they were back at WMS, where Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference was held—Sam as a delegate, Roma as part of the team leading worship.

In the Midwest I came across Cecil and Sharon Kennel, Strang, Neb., heading the worship team for Iowa-Nebraska Conference. They put a tremendous amount of work into it. People went home talking about those worship services. Not just that the services were different, but because they had met God.

When planning the services, Cecil wanted to have a symbol for the theme, peace and evangelism. He couldn't find one he liked, so he decided to do one of his own. No, Cecil told me, as a farmer he hadn't done anything like this before. But he poured himself into the task, combining a cross and a dove to note what must be at the center of our peace (see below).

Further East, Aquila and Priscilla are alive in Mel and Cathy Spory, Boswell, Pa., For 10 years this couple has planned and coordinated children's activities at Allegheny Mennonite Conference. Exciting activities they have been. More than one family says today that attending conference is no longer a choice at their house. Their children insist they go.

This year the Sporys turned over these responsibilities to someone else. That didn't keep them home on the farm, however. Cathy served as a delegate, asking questions, giving suggestions, voting to keep the church going.

Sam and Roma, Cecil and Sharon, Mel and Cathy—what these people have in common is more than being farmers. All find fulfillment in working behind the scenes. When they see that something needs to be done, they do it. Nor do they care who gets the credit.

They are great supporters of the church. I look forward to meeting them at district conference and churchwide meetings. I know I will be inspired by them—as I watch them work, as I talk with them.

Not that they are "yes" people. In private conversations, they raise questions about some of the directions they see the church headed. They wonder about some of our theology. But they also believe enough in the church to know that the changes they'd like to see will come as they put their time and energies into helping make them happen.

To single out these six is only a beginning. Like Paul in Romans 16, where he lists at least 28 supporters, I could fill this page with the names of many others: Ora and Katie, Mark and Betty, David and Annabelle, Diane, Sue, John . . . These are the Aquilas and Priscillas of our day, the persons who make the ministry of others possible. Thank God for them. May their example inspire more of us to become like them.—*jlp*

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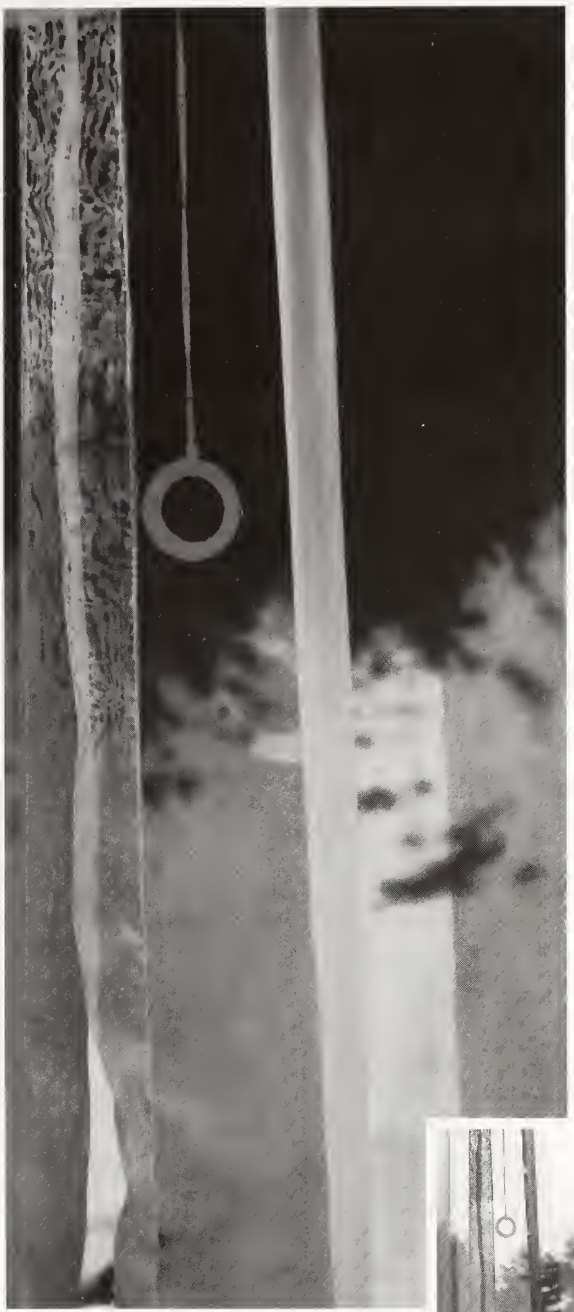
Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



Continuing a series on where the church might be headed and how to get there.

My vision for the Mennonite church (4):

As go the pastors, so goes the church

The direction of the church for the future will follow closely the direction its leadership takes. That future must give our pastors a more secure place to stand.

by Anne Stuckey

The role of the pastor in the Mennonite church today, in all its goodness and angst, embodies the transition of this generation. Today some pastors hold down a full-time job in addition to pastoring. Some pastors spend their entire time shepherding a congregational body of believers. Some pastors enable the congregation to take responsibility for the entire work of the church, and other pastors clearly are "lead pastors."

All these different roles are found in varying degrees in the experience of every pastor. Today I watch pastors trying to stand in many places, never quite sure that the role they are filling is the right one for this moment.

For example, some days the pastor is asked to be a strong leader by taking their place at the front and center of the church. This is especially true when it comes to theological questions. One of the first questions search committees often ask potential pastoral candidates is, "What do you believe about homosex-

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Margaret Loewen Reimer:
Who are the Mennonites in Europe today? 6

'Perspective' by J. Robert Charles:
At the beach and on boundary waters 10

MCC responds to sanctions continued by U.N. against Iraq 11

MWC Faith and Life Council collects faith statements 12

Too few of the gifted persons in our church are being called to leadership. We have not adequately developed the congregational role in calling pastors.

uality?" This question has become the litmus test for congregations to ascertain not only the orthodoxy of pastoral candidates but also their ability to take firm positions and lead. The strong leader pastor is asked to take a stand and help the congregation know what they believe.

On other days, however, the pastor may be asked to be a cooperative leader, teaming with others in ministry and helping the congregation work together and make decisions as a group. Again pastoral candidates are watched and judged as to how well they work with others. Now the crucial question is, "Is this pastor a team player?"

Yet at other times the pastor is clearly the employee of the congregation. This comes through most certainly in times of pastoral evaluations. Even though denominational leaders in ministerial leadership have worked for the past 15 years to separate pastoral evaluation and the vote for tenure, a business model which combines the two is still used by most congregations.

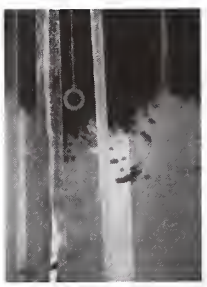
So where is the pastor to stand? Is the pastor the strong leader, the cooperative leader, or the employee of the congregation? The pastor may be all three at different times. But it takes considerable guidance by the Holy Spirit and political savvy to know when to change roles. Meanwhile, the pastor is left not knowing if ministry is ever a secure place to stand.

In the midst of all this jockeying to be in the right role at the right time, the question most conspicuous by its absence is, "Is the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ occurring? Are people being ministered to and hearing the good news of salvation?"

I hope that in the future we can provide a more secure place for the pastor to stand so that ministry can take place. But for this to happen, attitudes and active involvement in ministry will need to change. Congregations will need to free significant blocks of uninterrupted time for the pastor to spend in prayer and Bible study. I sat with one evaluation committee who begrudged the pastor even 15 minutes of devotional and prayer time in the morning. Ministry cannot spring from a dry well! Congregational leaders must join in ministry with the pastor rather than merely support his or her ministry from a comfortable distance. This will likely require fewer votes for tenure and more regular feedback mechanisms that are acted upon with integrity.

Human beings serve best when their role responsibilities and status are made secure by clear boundaries and caring relationships. This truth is operative wherever relationships form the basis of the structure. And it is equally true in the church.

Anne Stuckey is minister of congregational leadership for the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries and preaching minister at Salem Mennonite Church, Waldron. Mich.



by Myron Augsburger

I have a dream of the Mennonite church becoming a community of the reconciled and the reconciling that is more sensitive to the sovereign leading of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Word, more effective in our witness as disciples of Christ, more cosmopolitan without losing our faithfulness to Christ in the world, and more humbly respectful of the different gifts of the Spirit in congregations.

One very important goal for the future is strong leadership for Mennonite congregations. The early Anabaptist church had some strong preachers with education commensurate with leaders in other churches, but this has not always been a high priority for congregations. Too few of the gifted persons in our church are being called to pastoral roles. This is largely because we have not adequately developed the congregational voice in calling persons.

One contributing factor is the loss of the congregational function in looking for members who are gifted and called by God for a particular ministry. In the past our use of the lot for ordination meant that the congregation selected some of its most qualified and gifted persons as candidates for ministry. Whether they should have prayed and voted again to select the person rather than to resort to the lot is a necessary question. The fact that the congregation selected persons to be in the lot, however, means that the responsibility for calling leaders was taken seriously.

We need desperately to revive this sense of calling by the congregation. In light of the fact that seminary education is so important today, so that we have a ministry that is abreast of the professional level of many in the congrega-

tion, we should refocus the importance of congregational voice in calling. Calling should be a function of the congregation, an exercise of spiritual discernment by the community of faith to select and support persons whom they see as gifted by God for ministry. Rather than leaving it to the individual for a private sense of calling, the community of faith could select persons from their midst and send them to seminary.

If this procedure were followed, we could send more persons for training than needed at any given time. This would allow for the emergence of gifts for evangelism, missions, and specialized ministries beyond the number needed for pastorates. This would also mean that men and women with a sense of call would not be left to individualistic affirmations but would follow a direction affirmed by the congregation. Further, this would allow for persons who have acquired some pastoral experience to move into church-planting roles while inexperienced persons serve the established congregation in which mature lay persons would serve as their counselors and enablers. If we are to be a strong church in the next century, we need to develop a sufficient number of well-qualified congregational leaders.

Myron S. Augsburger is adjunct professor of theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He formerly served as pastor at Washington Community Fellowship, Washington, D.C.

by James Gingerich

I envision a Mennonite church driven by mission and vision that at the same time sees the need for well-defined structures that help to carry out that mission and vision in a spirit of unity.

The direction the Mennonite church takes in the future will follow closely the direction that pastoral leadership takes in the churches. I envision a Mennonite church that gives strong focus to pastoral leadership in the following ways:

- Calling out some of its most qualified young women and men to enter into pastoral leadership.

In this issue, Gospel Herald *continues its series on vision for the church for the future. Twenty-five Mennonite leaders write about where the church should go and how it might get there.*

Your response is welcome. Please keep your responses short—no more than 150-200 words. They will appear in future issues in "Readers Say." Send them to "My Vision," Gospel Herald, *616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683.*

E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com

- Providing good models for youth through positive pastor-congregation relationships that makes pastoral ministry attractive to them.
- Offering a seminary program that prepares pastors with a strong biblical foundation that is also well grounded in Anabaptist beliefs, one which has pastoral ministry as a strong thrust.
- Organizing area and countrywide conferences that provide support and growth opportunities for pastors.
- Developing a growing sensitivity among lay people in the local congregation to see the importance of helping pastors grow rather than using up the gifts that the pastor brings and then discarding that pastor.

I envision a Mennonite church that understands the implications of national boundaries and a sensitivity to imposing national issues on binational meetings. At the same time, I imagine a Mennonite church that is not divided because of national boundaries but whose program is enhanced by its differences. Perhaps one way to increase understanding between Canada and the United States would be to have a binational ministerial leadership office that would facilitate more pastors crossing national boundaries to provide congregational leadership.

While a shift in giving to congregations and conferences rather than to churchwide boards will continue, integration will help us to avoid duplication of efforts, to maintain strong programs, and to develop innovative ministries.

The direction our pastoral leadership goes is the direction that our conference will eventually take. We need to give primary attention to developing realistic expectations and support systems for pastors, seminaries, area conferences, and congregations. We need strong, committed pastors who will help strengthen congregations and in turn make possible strong conferences.

James Gingerich is pastor of First Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan., and was cochair of the Integration Exploration Committee.

"We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."—Romans 14:7-8, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

I was saddened that both "Readers Say" responses to the news story, ***Exploring Syria*** (June 4), were based on a series of misconceptions:

1. In his letter (June 25), Dennis Byler declared members of the MCC study tour to Syria spiritually ignorant by assuming we prayed with the Muslims we visited. The story nowhere said that. Instead, a Mennonite professor gave a speech, which was followed by a speech from the highest Muslim authority in Syria—both before an audience of 12,000.

These were timely speeches, since they came soon after the massacre in Cana, Lebanon, where over 100 Muslim civilians were killed by Western-backed Israel forces. Muslims were very angry at the Christian West, which they believed blindly supported this act.

Part of the MCC group's peacemaking speech said: "We come from the West as people of faith, and because of our faith we do not always agree with or support what the West has done or is doing in the Middle East." Thus instead of preaching on the street corners, as Byler recommended, we witnessed to our faith before an audience of 12,000—which may have been the largest group of Muslims ever addressed by a Mennonite.

MCC sponsors a tour to the Middle East every two years to keep constituency in touch with our work and to learn from our partners. The tour members saw a worship that combined singing, reenactments of gospel events, Scripture, and prayers in a drama so powerful that many of us were weeping for joy on Palm Sunday and in grief on Good Friday with our fellow Syrian Christians. Members of the tour went back to the roots of Christian worship —followers of "the way" were first called Christians at Antioch—and will share what they learned with the Mennonite church. The group was not abandoning their Mennonite roots, as Byler imagined.

2. In her letter (July 23), Katharyn Iwanowski assumed that most of the participants in this tour had their way paid by MCC. The story didn't say this either. Most of this delegation paid their own airfare, and MCC provided in-country expenses in a way designed to maximize benefit to our church partners in Syria.

We ate one meal a day of food prepared by the kitchen of a sheltered workshop for the disabled. The group stayed at a convent whose nuns run a center for Christian education for the children of the poor. Most of the expenses for the visit went to church program in ways that helped them support their ministries with dignity.

Iwanowski also assumed that we were not teaching about Mennonite faith and traditions. In reality much of our time outside of worship was spent with the Christians we met, both listening to them and explaining our faith. We even asked some tough questions about discipleship and peacemaking of some of the church leaders we met.

Iwanowski also assumed that the communist state-controlled Orthodox Church in Russia she left in the 1950s was the same as the current Orthodox Church in Syria. The latter worships freely, openly, and powerfully. There was standing room only in most of the services the group attended.

Gospel Herald does a profound disservice to its readers when it publishes comments based on misconceptions that it is partially responsible for creating by over-editing and re-titling articles. This also has the potential of damaging the reputation of church institutions such as MCC.

Roy Hange
Damascus, Syria

In his passionate article, ***We Are Free to Do Whatever We Want!*** (July 16), Alan Kauffman describes a dimension of the apostle Paul's message of grace seldom acknowledged by Mennonites. He claims that divine forgiveness and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit imply a euphoric experience of radical freedom.

I agree, for the most part, with Kauffman's interpretation of grace as the central presupposition of the Christian life. In this respect, I identify with the evangelical Protestant tradition.

But I am puzzled by Kauffman's characterization of radical freedom as "total freedom." Radical freedom would seem to stand in opposition to legalism. Total freedom, by contrast, would seem to stand in opposition to the law as such. But there is no such thing as total freedom in this world. Furthermore, repudiation of the law would seem to imply disorder.

Law, of course, may take many

forms. It may be that in the euphoria of forgiveness, as in the bliss of honeymoon love, one may enjoy what may momentarily seem to be total freedom. But the institution of marriage, as well as the realities of congregational life, would seem to require the paradoxical support of law along with freedom.

To be sure, the apostle Paul preached total forgiveness. But to be absolutely forgiven and to be totally free are different things. It is a matter of record that the New Testament church gradually developed a body of law and even had its own courts (1 Cor. 6:2). No Christian community has ever been able to live long by the Spirit alone.

Law and grace are not the same. They are so different that many theologians have seen them as being antithetical. Others see them as complementary. But mainstream Christianity, ever since Augustine, while emphasizing grace, has been required to make room for them both.

Ironically, the more grace is emphasized, the more law becomes a preoccupation. The converse, however, is not necessarily the case.

Kauffman acknowledges that Paul's doctrine of freedom is "dangerous." I agree. The task of the church is to hold both in tension while exalting grace and respecting law for the purpose of maintaining continuity, learning from the past, and defending the freedom of some from the excesses of others.

J. Lawrence Burkholder
Goshen, Ind.

Thank you for your editorial, ***In Praise of 95-Year-Old Women: What Keeps Leaders Going*** (Aug. 27). It encapsulated the many feelings I hold for my grandmother (who is just a couple years shy of 90 and full of wisdom).

Although Grandma and I disagree on some theological issues and some biblical perspectives, her constant spiritual guidance and encouragement have been a true blessing in my life. When I'm struggling through a tough time in life, I am reassured and encouraged to know that my grandma prays for me (and all of her grandchildren by name) each morning and each night. I receive strength through her spiritual strength during such times.

Sue L. Conrad
State College, Pa.

At about the same time one group of Americans was delivering cruise missiles to Iraq, another group of Americans, through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), was sending in cans of beef and school kits.

Those Americans who delivered the cruise missiles tell us they can land one exactly where they want, plus or minus a mere 50 feet. Speaking on behalf of the Americans who deliver the beef, I can say that we deliver beef with even greater accuracy

We heard during the Persian Gulf War that each cruise missile costs around $1 million. For that same million dollars, I could deliver around 150 tons of beef to average Iraqi folk who are literally starving because of the international embargo.

So let's do it like this. If you wanted to win the hearts and minds of a starving Iraqi, would you do it by (a) trying to blow his or her head off or (b) buying him or her a whole bunch of good meals. I know which I would prefer.

Think about the Americans who are footing the bills—hardworking, taxpaying decent folks, just like you and me. Should they be satisfied with a missile delivery accuracy of only 50 feet, while at the same time beef delivery accuracy is so much better? Not only that, but having to spend $1 million for every ton of missile delivered seems to me outrageous. For the same money, I could do 150 times better than that.

It seems cynical, I know, but after four years of living in the region and seeing the suffering endured by Iraqis, and knowing how absolutely forgotten they are by the world, and how every single other approach has been tried at least 10 times, I want to try the food approach.

Paul Pereverzoff
MCC Jordan

Thank you for publishing the tributes to Alicia Showalter Reynolds (Aug. 27). At the Slate Hill Mennonite Church, we joined many others in the larger church in our fervent prayers for Alicia's well-being and safe return to her family. Our own family, having experienced the death of an adult daughter—though in very different circumstances—suffered with the Showalters and Reynolds.

Now we also grieve, though not as those who have no hope. I am particularly grateful for the honesty and the forthrightness of the material you published. When there is great loss, there is great grief, no matter what our religious commitments.

Special thanks to Shirley Hershey Showalter for her portrait of Alicia and to Ed Stoltzfus for the unnerving honesty of his prayer of complaint. May the God of all comfort be with those who mourn.

Paul W. Nisly
Grantham, Pa.

Thanks for printing the article, ***Learning to Know and Practice the Passions of God's Heart*** (Sept. 3). All four points were so well chosen.

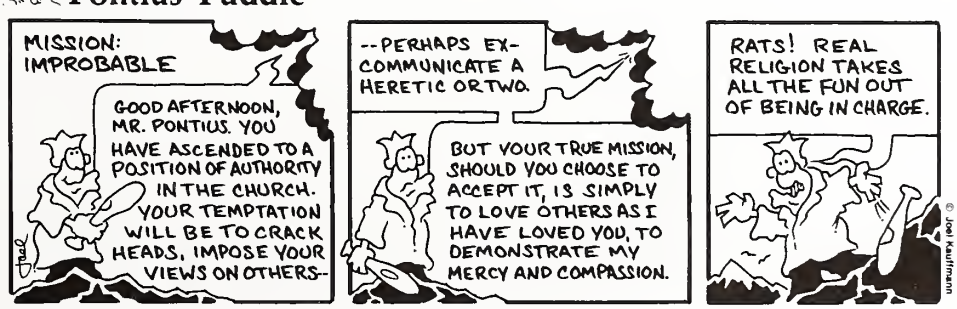
Virginia Spicher
Irwin, Pa.

Regarding the item advertising a convention of the Brethren / Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns ("Coming Events," Aug. 27) with the theme, "Piecing Together New Patterns from Old Cloth":

Please cancel our subscription to *Gospel Herald*. We cannot in good conscience subscribe to a periodical that advertises an organization that condones homosexual activities.

Chris & Gladys Kennel
Parkesburg, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle



After five centuries of flux:

Who are the Mennonites

They are surprisingly few in number. Their life is markedly "noninstitutional." There is also a movement to reconnect with their peace church heritage.

by Margaret Loewen Reimer

What do North Americans know about Mennonites in Europe? We know that the Mennonite church began in the Reformation turmoil of 16th-century Europe, but what does the Mennonite church look like today?

I was in for some surprises as I visited churches and met Mennonites in several countries during a year's leave in Europe in 1994-95.

One surprise was the small number of Mennonites there. Switzerland and France, for example, have a combined membership of less than 5,000. Germany has about 8,000 Mennonites, plus another 20,000 or so among recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union, in a country of 80 million. (By comparison, Canada has about 117,000 Mennonites in a country of 28 million.)

While North American Mennonites are organized into a myriad of conferences, each with their schools, mission boards, publications, and other institutions, European Mennonites are markedly "noninstitutional." Few conferences have paid staff or offices. Churches are involved in operating homes for seniors and retreat centers, but there are few Mennonite schools.

Dutch Mennonites have a seminary with two full-time and several part-time faculty at the University of Amsterdam. The European Mennonite Bible School in Switzerland, Bienenberg, has been operating since 1951, and there are recent Bible school ventures in Germany and Austria. There is a movement to begin a seminary for German-speaking Mennonites, but many fear there are too few Mennonites to support it.

I also discovered that we North Americans are far more intent on "preserving the tradition" than are our European "parents." Perhaps our immigrant identity has fueled our passion for Mennonite history and identity. (German Mennonites were quick to point out, however, that their encyclopedia, *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, was begun long before North Americans began thinking about one.)

Amazing variety. The first thing to note about Mennonites in Europe today is the amazing variety of groups. Five centuries of flux and change, of wars and changing borders, have shaped church life differently in each region.

Dutch Mennonites, known as *Doopsgezinde*, which means "baptism-minded," reflect their country's history of

Mennonite groups in Europe (1995)

Group	*Members*	*Churches*
The Netherlands		
Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit	15,000	130
Germany		
Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden (3 oldest conferences)	6,541	51
Brüdergemeinden (Mennonite Brethren)	1,545	20
Aussiedler (Soviet Union emigrants)	20,000	60
Agape Gemeindewerk (mission)	270	10
Switzerland		
Konferenz der Mennoniten der Schweiz—Alttäufer	2,464	15
France		
Association des Églises Évangéliques Mennonites de France	2,000	27
Austria		
Mennonite Brethren	400	8
Former Soviet Union	3,350	
Italy	180	7
Belgium	150	4
Spain	120	4
Luxembourg	100	2
Portugal	35	2
Britain & Ireland	35	1

in Europe today?

Since 1970, over 105,000 Mennonites from the former Soviet Union have been accepted into Germany on the basis of their "German nationality." Some 20,000 of these Aussiedler have organized themselves into congregations, such as the one shown above.

stability, tolerance, and self-sufficiency. The undisturbed continuity of church life has meant, however, that Mennonites in the Netherlands soon lost most of their distinctives and are almost indistinguishable from their sister denominations.

Dutch Mennonites work closely with other churches and share a hymnal with the Reformed church. Congregations are independent. Worship remains traditional and formal by North American standards, and most churches have little lay or youth involvement. Congregational singing is unison, accompanied by a pipe organ. Pastors are university-trained through the Mennonite seminary.

While Dutch Mennonites appear to be largely assimilated, they are struggling with their Mennonite identity, spurred this year by 500th birthday celebrations of their most famous leader, Menno Simons.

In contrast to the Dutch experience is the harsh history of the Swiss Mennonites. Decimated by emigrations and driven to rural areas by persecution, the *Alttäufer*, "old baptizers," became the "quiet in the land" for centuries. Nonresistance soon evaporated under rigid governments, and other distinctives were transformed by Swiss Pietism.

Lay leadership and "family churches" are still common in Switzerland. The last decade has seen a transition to urban life and increasing assimilation. Growing interest in Swiss Mennonite history has been accompanied by efforts to legalize alternative service. In the 1980s the Swiss church officially adopted the name "Mennonite."

Mennonites in France, who are of Swiss emigrant heritage, have also endured a turbulent history. For many years France had two Mennonite conferences—one German-speaking (Alsace-Lorraine region) and one French-speaking. The two merged into one French-speaking conference in 1980.

French Mennonites have been shaped by both the traditionalism of their Swiss origins and by mainline French evangelicalism. Still largely a rural group, in this century they have seen a renewal of church life and awareness of the Anabaptist heritage.

South German Mennonites, also largely of

Migrations have been a large part of the Mennonite experience in Europe. Since 1970, the largest migration of Mennonites ever is taking place as some 105,000 Aussiedler are moving from the former Soviet Union into Germany.

Swiss origin, formed a conference (*Verband*) in 1854. Today this group has 1,374 members in 20 congregations. Their sister conference in the southwest (Rhineland-Palatinate) has 2,170 members in 16 congregations, while the north German conference (*Vereinigung*) has 2,997 members in 15 congregations.

Since 1990, all three groups have worked together in a new association while maintaining their own programs and church life. North German churches are similar in worship and theology to their Dutch counterparts, with whom they had close association until World War I. South German churches are more shaped by Pietism and lay leadership.

While each country organizes its own mission efforts, European churches gather for a regular missions conference. Service and peace work is coordinated through the International Mennonite Organization and the European Mennonite Peace Committee. Dutch youth host an annual international Mennonite youth conference.

Newer churches. Since World War II, European Mennonite identity has undergone a dramatic change. The war was a crisis that forced Mennonites to rethink their faith. Post-war assistance from North American Mennonites, particularly Pax volunteers, made a profound impression, helping European Mennonite churches to recover their peace church identity and renew their vision for mission.

The war also prepared the soil for mission outreach. Mennonite Board of Missions workers helped establish homes for orphans and the disabled in France, student centers in Paris and London, and a church center in Belgium. Mennonite Central Committee was a partner in starting the Bible school in Switzerland. Mission work began in Italy in 1949 and Luxembourg in the early 1950s.

Mennonite Brethren (MB) fleeing the Soviet Union after the war established congregations in Germany and began evangelizing. MB mission workers from North America worked among refugees in Austria, leading to the establishment of a Mennonite Brethren conference there in 1970.

Recent mission efforts have led to new congregations in Spain and Portugal, and outreach has extended into Poland and Albania.

Margaret Loewen Reimer, Waterloo, Ont., is associate editor of Mennonite Reporter. In 1995 *she spent a sabbatical in Europe and wrote these articles for Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group.*

Losing and now reco

Twelve weeks after Adolf Hitler seized power in 1933, leaders of the *Vereinigung* (the Mennonite conference in northern Germany and the Palatinate region) declared "our duty to conform to and serve the state. . . . German Mennonites do not want to claim any special privileges in the event that conscription is reinstated."

In 1935, the elders of the *Verband* (South German conference) affirmed nonresistance, "but without restricting the free decision of each individual."

So states a 1989 booklet of the German Mennonite Peace Committee, entitled *The Difficulties of Being a Peace Church.* The booklet traces the loss of the peace church heritage in Europe.

In the Netherlands, Mennonites were contributing to their country's defense already in the 1600s, making "great financial contributions when the nation was threatened." By the time conscientious objection was abolished there in 1898, Mennonite objection had long since disappeared.

In Germany, the Krefeld Mennonite congregation chose in the early 1800s to let each member decide about military service. "Not a single person, however, took advantage of this right which remained until 1918," says the booklet.

It was a Mennonite parliamentarian, Hermann von Beckerath, who opposed putting the right to conscientious objection in the German constitution of 1848. He argued that, given conscription and the equality of all citizens, Mennonite exemption from military service would be an "abnormality."

"In no way is objection to military service regarded as an integral part of the faith," said von Beckerath, who was from the Krefeld church. "I am certain that throughout Germany the heightened sense of the importance of the state will assure that this first duty of a citizen will be performed."

ing the peace position

In southern Germany, men who joined the army were initially expelled from their congregations as elders tried to solidify the principle of nonresistance. But by the early 1800s, "there was no strength to resist," says the peace committee study.

Until World War II, it was possible for Prussian Mennonites to apply for alternative service, but nationalistic fervor increased here as well. A few weeks after the war between France and Germany began in 1870, the Mennonite congregation of Danzig resolved to "abandon the creed of unconditional nonresistance and to let each decide individually." During World War I, few Mennonites used the alternative, and none did during World War II.

In Switzerland and France, the Napoleonic Code gave equal rights to Mennonite citizens in the early 1800s but also asked for equal duties. Those who were not ready to compromise their nonresistance tended to emigrate, leaving a "spiritual vacuum." The attainment of rights, coupled with their sense of submission to authority, led Mennonites to absolute obedience to the state.

Pietism led to some renewal in Mennonite congregations, but there was no interest in nonviolence. Only since World War II have Swiss Mennonites begun "a cautious reorientation" to the Anabaptist legacy.

By the end of the 19th century, the only European Mennonites maintaining their conscientious objection were those living in self-regulated colonies in Russia. When their privileges were threatened in the 1870s, many emigrated to North America. Those who remained were required to perform alternative service.

During the years of anarchy and revolution in Russia around 1920, some Mennonites organized armed units to defend their villages. The new Soviet state granted conscientious objection privileges to religious minorities, but these were repealed by Stalin in 1936.

World War II and its aftermath led to a major rethinking of the faith among Mennonites in Europe. The material aid from North American Mennonites and the service of the Pax volunteers made a profound impression: "Their peace service contributed much to the recovery of peace church identity in Europe," says the booklet.

Seminars and conferences, exchange programs, and a new Bible school helped revive the Anabaptist heritage.

In 1949 and 1950, German Mennonites issued resolutions stating that they "had gained a deeper awareness of the importance of the heritage of their fathers" and "recommitted themselves to the . . . biblical truth of nonresistance." They also proposed to the German government that conscientious objection be recognized.

The German Mennonite Peace Committee was founded in 1956 to strengthen the peace witness in congregations and to support conscientious objectors. Since 1980, conferences and congregations have taken more ownership in peace education.

In the Netherlands, a group of Mennonites began working against military service in 1922. Reorganized after World War II, the Dutch Mennonite peace group has been very active in peace education and witness.

—Margaret Loewen Reimer

The Mennonite seminary in Amsterdam (left and center buildings) with the entrance to the Singel Mennonite Church shown at right.

At the beach and on the boundary waters

Where "time moves more slowly, . . . a part of beauty that cannot be hurried if it is to be understood. Without this easy flowing, life can become empty and hectic."

by J. Robert Charles

There's a car to drive, and a laptop to lug. Then those phone calls, e-mailings, and faxes relentlessly coming in and going out. Add to that newspapers to skim, lectures to prepare, clocks to watch, deadlines to meet. Don't forget those minutes to take, reports to write, meetings to attend, and appointments to keep. And with those airplanes to catch, racquetballs to hit, and costs to count, there's hardly time to look up.

For most of the year, my life unfolds amidst all these familiar artifices and activities of modern life. Work in the garden and yard occasionally gets me out into nature. But my curiosity gravitates toward what's happening—and what happened—in the realm of human affairs and ideas. It is the social and political world, not the natural world, that gets my attention.

So, a variety of (re)discoveries and reflections lay in wait for me this summer along the beaches of Lake Michigan and on the boundary waters of northern Minnesota.

Everything that exists is a mixture of earth, water, air, and fire—set in motion by the forces of love and strife. This idea must have come to the ancient philosopher Empedocles as he walked along the beach on a cloudless day, for here these substances meet in full intensity. To one side water, to the other land, and a cooling breeze across the face. Above, the fiery sun to remind me, as it did Albert Camus, that history is not everything. The elements caress and contend on this strand where human footprints so quickly melt into the sand.

Into this natural splendor and energy intrudes the psalmist's pensive question, "what is man that thou are mindful of him?" Yet this is far from the sad place where poet Matthew Arnold heard the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the Sea of Faith, "retreating, to the breath / of the night wind. . . ." A beach such as this once welcomed a prophet who, after a less-than-conventional vacation on and under the waters, picked himself up, washed himself off, and headed back inland, this time to Nineveh.

It was on a suddenly stormy lake that Jesus calmed both troubled hearts and waters. And did he not come to the lakeshore to look, as the hymn puts it, "neither for wealthy nor wise ones"? Now, as in the beginning, the dry land emerges from the waters, and to walk it is to sense the Spirit of God moving anew.

While time on the beach offers re-creation, a foray into the boundary waters leads to other primal destinations.

Our nine-person party relearns basic tasks and tools of human culture as we reenact, even if unconsciously, the founding American myth of the "errand into the wilderness." We come, however, not to break into and tame but to leave it as we find it, to contemplate, to marvel, to learn.

Five days without watches strapped to arms produces harmony with "the time clock of the wilderness," as Sigurd Olson calls it. "It is one of the great compensations of the primitive experience," he writes, "and when one finally reaches the point where days are governed by daylight and dark, rather than by schedules, where one eats if hungry and sleeps when tired, and become completely immersed in the ancient rhythms, then one begins to live."

Olson is right. "Time moves more slowly, as it should, for it is a part of beauty that it cannot be hurried if it is to be understood. Without this easy flowing, life can become empty and hectic."

We navigate by compass and map, paddle and portage our canoes, build fires, set up and break camp. We eat the wild berries we gather and the fish we catch. For two days we're the sole human inhabitants of a small island, but why waste time on a constitution for a group of fathers and daughters? So instead we bask in the sun, seek shelter from the rain, coexist with the mosquitoes and try—unsuccessfully—to coax an imperious bald eagle into flight.

In the deep, still night the haunting call of the loon echoes across the waters. And overhead the stars may be even more numerous than when God invited Abraham to look up and count.

J. Robert Charles teaches history at Goshen (Ind.) College and is coordinator for Africa and Europe at Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind.

Mennonite Central Committee responds to continued sanctions against Iraq

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—The recent escalation of violence in Iraq will only deepen Iraqi people's suffering, say Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers.

International sanctions were renewed on Sept. 3 for another 60 days. This happened as Saddam Hussein's forces invaded a Kurdish-controlled city in northern Iraq and the United States retaliated with missile attacks on Iraq. Earlier the United Nations had discussed permitting Iraq to sell oil to buy much-needed food and medicine.

"Even though Iraqi people may not have been hurt directly by the U.S. missiles, they are suffering terribly under continuing international sanctions," says Paul Pereverzoff, codirector of MCC work in Jordan. The sanctions have not served to soften Saddam Hussein's brutal reign.

Currently 13,600 MCC school kits are being distributed to Iraqi children as the new school year begins. It took MCC more than a year to obtain U.S. Treasury Department permission to send these school supplies. An MCC shipment of 1,892 comforters is still being detained in Jordan as the U.N. sanctions committee deliberates over whether it can be allowed into Iraq.

'Forgotten of the forgotten.' Two years ago, MCC beef was used in a school lunch program in which each child received a sandwich and a glass of milk. Attendance rose dramatically. Relief workers estimated this small lunch comprised four-fifths of the children's daily caloric intake.

In February, 400 cases of MCC canned beef went to the 1,000 residents of the Al-Rashad Mental Hospital in Baghdad. This was the first meat they had eaten in more than a year.

"These are the forgotten of the forgotten of the forgotten," says Pereverzoff. "In any culture, people with mental illnesses are forgotten—in times of crisis even more so, and the Iraqis as a people have been forgotten by the world."

Ed Epp, who in 1991 visited the Kurdish area that the Iraqi military recently attacked, says the Kurds are also among the world's forgotten people. "The image of thousands of human beings coming over the mountain passes, carrying what they could, wearing their best clothes, walking through the mud and snow will haunt me forever," says Epp, who directs MCC's Middle East program. Some one million Kurds became refugees because of the Persian Gulf War and its aftermath. In 1991 MCC airlifted food, clothing, and blankets to Kurds who had fled Iraq into Iran.

A stopgap measure. Epp calls the safe haven established for the Kurds in northern Iraq after the Persian Gulf War a "stopgap measure," not a solution to the Kurdish aspiration for a homeland.

"In Iraq a violent response will only make life more difficult for the innocent. It will sow the seeds of hatred and anger, not only in Iraq, but also in other Arab countries," says Epp. "This is a pragmatic response, but theologically, too, we Mennonites cannot endorse violence. To follow Jesus is to follow peace."—*Pearl Sensenig*

MWC executives plan beyond India 1997

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—Mennonite World Conference executive committee members met in northeast Holland in July to consider a 27-point agenda.

The committee endorsed an international petition to governments of industrialized countries entitled, "Climate Change—Urgent Action Needed!" Already supported by Lutheran, Reformed, and Seventh-Day Adventist world church bodies, the statement calls on industrialized nations to make good on promises to reduce greenhouse emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000 as agreed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janiero, Brazil, in 1992. "This is something which is good for the environment," insisted bishop Joram Mbeba from Tanzania. "The rainy season has become uncommon in Africa because Europe is polluting a lot. We must indeed take care of the earth if we are to be salt of the earth."

Other business. The executive committee also spent considerable time discussing India 1997. Margaret Devadason of India, who directs the Calcutta Mennonite Central Committee office, invited counsel and decisions on many practical matters. And although it is at least six years away, Assembly 14 was also on the agenda. The committee voted unanimously to explore options for holding the next world gathering in Africa or Latin America.

MWC president Raul Garcia announced that Larry Miller was reelected by MWC member churches to a second six-year term as executive secretary following India 1997.

School work. *Hesston, Kan. (HC)*—Hesston (Kan.) College first-year student Paul Lakin removes ceiling tiles from a hallway of Newton's Axtell Hospital. About 170 first-year students participated in a two-hour community service project—the first exercise of General Education Seminar I. The group scraped paint, removed carpet and ceiling tiles, swept, pulled weeds, moved furniture, and mowed the lawn of the hospital. New Jerusalem Missions plans to turn the vacant hospital into housing for people infected with the AIDS virus.

Students at the three Mennonite Church-sponsored colleges—Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; Goshen (Ind.) College; and Hesston College—began classes the last week of August and first week of September.

Mennonites help victims of flooding in China

Akron, Pa. (MCC-GCMC)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church have together contributed $12,000 (U.S.) to help rebuild schools and homes destroyed by summer floods along the Yangtze River in central China.

More than 1,600 persons have lost their lives and hundreds of thousands of homes have been destroyed. Much of the summer's rice and cotton crop has been lost, forcing some already poverty-stricken areas to rely totally on the government for grain assistance.

Amity Foundation, a relief and development organization initiated by the Chinese church, will distribute the funds. The foundation is currently assisting people in several poor and hard-hit counties in Anhui Province. In addition to rebuilding several primary schools, materials will be purchased to reconstruct a home for elderly people.

Dreaded words help launch new business

Lancaster, Pa. (MEDA)—"No one will hire you."

Carol Deckert heard those dreaded words four years ago from an unemployment officer. After years as an executive secretary, she was apparently too old (then 42) and too expensive to land a comparable job.

Deckert opened her own company a year later, a secretarial service called A.S.A.P. Business Services. She also got involved with Assets, a program offered by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) in Lancaster, Pa. The program offers training and support to lower- and moderate-income entrepreneurs who are starting or expanding a small business. Also available are small loans through local lenders, as well as mentor relationships.

Today Deckert has a partner, several employees, and 11 subcontractors. She is one of 69 Assets participants who have started or expanded a small business since the program began three years ago, says Assets director Howard Good. Besides providing jobs for their owners, the businesses have created 16 full-time and 50 part-time positions, says Good.

A replication of the Assets program is underway in Norristown, Pa.

Pioneering work. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Hector Castellanos (left) from Honduras and Steve Gibbs from New Jersey are Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) team members working in Cusco, Peru. Hector and Dilcia Castellanos, EMM missionaries to Peru in 1994, are the first international members of that mission team. José Santiago, EMM's director of Latin Ministries, felt the Peru mission would benefit from the experience of Latino missionaries who were equipped to begin discipleship and growth groups. The Castellanos responded to the call—and soon found themselves pioneering in new territory.

For Hector, who didn't speak much English, the adjustment to an all-Anglo mission team was difficult. "Sometimes we felt inferior to the other missionaries because we couldn't express our opinions, and it seemed our thoughts were not welcome. Sometimes we thought they'd switch to English when they didn't want us to understand!"

Mission intern Wanita Knouse had only an elementary understanding of Spanish—so meetings either catered to her (English) or favored Hector (Spanish).

Another transition was cultural—Hector and Dilcia expected to be able to slide right into ministry with the Peruvians but were surprised to be called "gringos," the Spanish word for foreigners.—*Jewel Showalter*

MWC: Faith and Life Council collects faith statements

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—How do churches in the global Anabaptist-Mennonite family understand and describe Christian faith and practice?

Ten people appointed by Mennonite World Conference (MWC) hope to answer this question by studying statements of faith from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches worldwide.

Summary report. Readers will report their findings to MWC's new Faith and Life Council when it convenes at India 1997 Assembly (Jan. 6-12).

The reading group was commissioned by the Faith and Life Council to write a summary report of what MWC member churches believe. Over 100 church leaders and MWC General Council members were invited to send statements of faith which they currently use and to respond to a questionnaire developed by the group.

The summary report in Calcutta will lift out both similarities and differences between these statements of faith, says Larry Miller, MWC executive secretary. "The report will describe what the churches confess and not prescribe what the churches should believe," says Miller. "But we hope that identifying both similarities and differences will prepare us to give and receive inspired counsel cross-culturally, an essential matter of Christian faith and life."

Composed of MWC General Council members from around the world, Faith and Life Council meetings will be open to other interested Assembly 13 participants. The decision to convene the Faith and Life Council came from the MWC General Council meeting in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in 1993. Beginning at India 1997, Faith and Life Council will likely meet every three years during regular MWC General Council meetings.

—*Marcus Shantz*

Japanese Mennonites react to U.S. bases

Okinawa, Japan (CPT)—The first referendum in Japan on any issue is expected to produce a positive vote for reduction and eventual removal of U.S. bases in the southern Japanese island of Okinawa. Mennonites in Japan are watching this vote very closely because some of the military bases may be moved to their communities.

Moving? Seventy-five percent of U.S bases in Japan are on Okinawa, which has one percent of the total Japanese land area. The present governor of Okinawa is refusing to give consent to renew agreements with the U.S for use of the land belonging to Okinawa farmers. This is the first time in 50 years that such a strong stand has been taken by any Japanese governor. But as long as the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty is in effect, it is certain that a positive vote will be overruled by the national government, and land belonging to farmers will continue to be seized for use by the U.S. military.

Mennonites on the northern island of Hokkaido dealt with the issue of the U.S. bases at their annual peace conference in January this year. The U.S. and Japanese governments have agreed that a U.S. Marine base will move from Okinawa to the Bekkai area in eastern Hokkaido where there are several vigorous Mennonite congregations. Members of these congregations have a long-standing concern and opposition to the Japanese Self-Defense Forces which have been in Bekkai even longer than the congregations. Mennonites have written letters to the mayors of the towns in Bekkai area voicing their opposition to the coming of the Marines.

Mennonite response. "Of course we don't want the Marines, yet some people feel that Okinawa shouldn't have to carry the whole burden on the U.S. bases," says one Mennonite leader. "Maybe it's time to spread the bases around Japan, even if they have to come to our area."

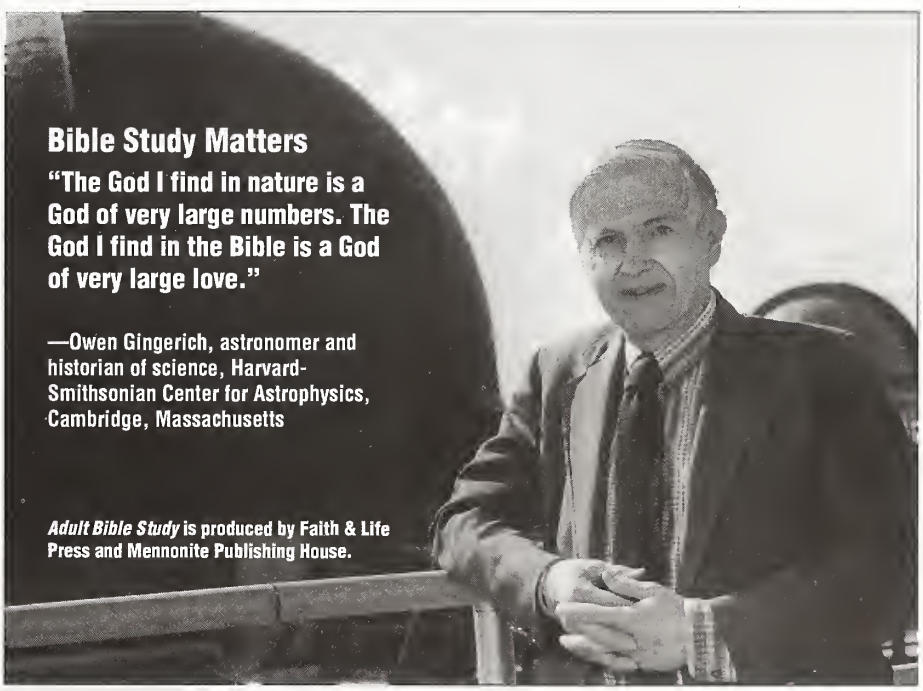
Other Japanese observers think that Japanese shouldn't have to keep paying for the U.S. presence on their soil. Many Japanese, including Mennonites, are disturbed by the use of the U.S. bases in Japan for the current air strikes in Iraq, as they were during the Gulf War and the Vietnam War.

—*Marvin Miller*

Work with women. *Kathmandu, Nepal (MCC)*—Tuleshowri (left), the housemother of the Kathmandu YWCA, is shown with two young residents of the YWCA. United Mission to Nepal (UMN), of which Mennonite Central Committee is a member, helped establish this YWCA in 1993 to provide a safe place for women to stay when they attend seminars in Nepal's capital, thus alleviating a major barrier to including women in meetings. The YWCA also provides temporary shelter for abused women and girls.

In 1990 UMN created the Advisory Group on Nepali Women to ensure its 35 health, education, and development programs meet women's special needs. The UMN agricultural training program was made "women-friendly" by shortening the sessions so women could attend while juggling their many family responsibilities. The training seminars are held closer to villages; when overnight travel is required, UMN staff reassure families that women will have a safe place to sleep. Now nearly 25 percent of participants are female.

Edgar Metzler, UMN executive director, asserts, "The best way to address family and community needs is to give women more opportunities and help them raise their status." Metzler is jointly appointed to his position by MCC and Mennonite Board of Missions.—*Pearl Sensenig*



• **Choice Books sales increase.** Choice Books distributors sold 1,039,107 books through July this year, a 16 percent increase over the same period in 1995. Distributors sold 145,003 more books than a year ago. Choice Books plans to have its own distributor organization operational by Jan. 1, 1998.

• **Host homes sought.** Host families are being sought for a new *Mennonite Your Way* directory, to be published in spring of 1997. *Mennonite Your Way* is a listing of Mennonite, Brethren, Brethren in Christ, and other Christian hosts who provide overnight accommodations and fellowship for travelers passing through their area. Registration forms are available from 717 653-9288. Registration closes on Dec. 10.

• **Missionary transitions:**
Mary Jane Myers began a three-year term with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Trans World Radio in July.
Jon Newswanger left for Moldova in August for a one-year term with EMM and Cross Links.
Jeanette Nisly began a three-year EMM term in Guatemala in August.
Marilyn Peters returned to the Netherlands after a two-month home leave. She began a two-year EMM assignment.
Janelle Shantz left for Thailand on Aug. 26 for a three-year EMM term.
Jerry and Sharon Stutzman, with Beth, returned to Kenya on Aug. 13 after a two-month home leave. They began a two-year EMM assignment.
Keith Zimmerman left for Lushnje, Albania, in August for an 18-month EMM term.

• **Coming events:**
Fall benefit banquet for Freedom Gate Ministries, Inc., Conestoga Christian School, Morgantown, Pa., Sept. 20. More information is available from 610 373-3042.
30th annual Virginia relief sale, Augusta Expoland, Fishersville, Va., Sept. 28. Includes auction of quilts and handcrafted furniture. Benefits Mennonite Central Committee. More information from 540 564-3600.
Storytelling weekend, Hesston (Kan.) College, Oct. 4-5. Freelance writer Katie Funk Wiebe is the featured speaker. Activities include workshops by faculty and pastors, matinee for children, and guidance for writing stories. Sponsored by Hesston's Life Education and Development Program (L.E.A.D). More information is available from Dwight Roth at 316 327-8326.
Fundraising lecture by Douglas Lawson, Peter Becker Community, Harleysville, Pa., Oct. 11. Sponsored by the Association of Anabaptist Risk Management. Includes a lecture titled "The Ministry of Joyful Fundraising" and a two-hour workshop. More information is available from 717 293-7840.
Productive Anger / Being Mindfully Angry, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference Center, Oct. 13. Sponsored by Nurturing Women in Church Leadership. Input by Mary Steffy. More information from 717 442-9888.
50th anniversary, Academia Menonita Betania, Aibonito, P.R., July 21-25. Includes tours, talent night, class reunions, and guest speakers. More information from 809 783-1295.

• **New books:**
God's Power, Jesus' Faith, and World Mission: A Study in Romans by Steve Mosher connects Paul's challenges to the church in his time with the mission of the church today. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.
Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History, by Harry Loewen and Steven Nolt with Carol Duerksen and Elwood Yoder, offers an account of Mennonites from the 1500s to today. Includes stories, photos, maps, and cartoons. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.
Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves: American Mennonites Engage Washington by Keith Graber Miller explores the development of the Mennonite Central Committee office in Washington, D.C., and the shift of Mennonites toward political engagement. Graber Miller argues that Mennonites have both influenced national policy making and have themselves been influenced by exposure to it. Available from The University of Tennessee Press, Chicago Distribution Center, 11030 S. Langley, Chicago, IL 60628.

• **Job openings:**
Development director, Bethany Christian Schools, Goshen, Ind. Send letter of interest and résumé to principal Allan Dueck, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

NEW MEMBERS

Blough, Hollsopple, Pa.: Terri Blough, Danell Gates, Denene Ronald, Brittney Saylor, and Katie Yoder.
Charlottesville, Va.: Wayne Russell and Kathy Russell.
Maple Grove, Belleville, Pa.: Zachary Farrell, Wayne Sheppard, and Rosalie Peachey.
North Suburban, Mundelein, Ill.: Esther Hackman, David and Diane Kerner, and Jay Stackhouse.
Plains, Hatfield, Pa.: Bob Devine and Rob Ferleger.
Southside Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind.: Shelly Glick.
Stahl, Johnstown, Pa.: William E. Horsley III, Cory Shetler, and Jeremy Thomas.
Sugar Creek, Wayland, Iowa: Amy Chupp, Janelle Eubanks, Melissa Kaufman, Erin Nebel, Amy Richard, Amanda Roth, and Matt Slagel.
West Clinton, Wauseon, Ohio: Jodi Waidelich and Brad Nofziger.
Yoder, Haven, Kan.: Delwyn Crabtree.
Zion, Hubbard, Ore.: Frank Brunk and Bea Brunk.

BIRTHS

Beachy, Jodi Gerber and R. Scott, Harrisonburg, Va., Raymond Tyler (third child), Aug. 21.
Bender, Amy Steanson and Ted, Haven, Kan., Abigail Sue (first child), July 14.
Berthold, Brenda Wert and Josef, Lancaster, Pa., Jeremy Alexander (third child), Aug. 15.
Charles, Brigid McCarthy and Daniel, Washington, D.C., Molly McCarthy (first child), July 17.
Cox, Susan Lapp and Kevin, West Liberty, Ohio, Colton Isaiah (second child), July 22.
Derstine, Cindy Alderfer and Ray, Harleysville, Pa., Hannah Renae (fourth child), Aug. 22.
Ferrando, Michelle Good and Michael, Cheverly, Md., Matthew Austin (first child), Aug. 5.
Gascho, Alice McNulty and Scott, Hubbard, Ore., Alyssa Rae (first child), Aug. 22.
Gingerich, Cynthia Swinford and Jon, Parnell, Iowa, Brandon Truman (second child), Aug. 17.
Hood, Amy King and Michael, Adamstown, Pa., Megan Nicole (first child), July 1.
Jantzi, Kathy Zehr and Darren, Lowville, N.Y., Abigail Lena (third child), Aug. 19.
Jones, Heather Burkholder and Shawn, Waynesboro, Va., Jonah Preston (first child), Aug. 14.
Neer, Angie Yoder and Paul, Belleville, Pa., Silas Lynn (first child), Aug. 7.
Peachey, Deanna Durham and Byron, Silver Spring, Md., Dylan Durham (first child), May 4.
Seaman, Jennifer Burgher and Lyle, Pittsburgh, Pa., Caleb (first child), Aug. 17.
Schindler, Bethany Lyndaker and Wayne, Turin, N.Y., Matthew Wayne (first child), Aug. 17.
Vetter, Pam Zook and Jonathan, Newton, Kan., Nathaniel James (second child), Aug. 16.
Yoder, Debra Heiser and Mark, Goshen, Ind., Adam Michael (first child), Aug. 10.

MARRIAGES

Amstutz-Brennamen: Eugene Amstutz, Orrville, Ohio (Kidron), and Jina Brennamen, Orrville, Ohio, Aug. 10, by Bill Detweiler and Herman Myers.
Bontrager-Nofziger: Steven Bontrager, Goshen, Ind. (Church of the Brethren), and Londa Nofziger, Goshen, Ind. (West Clinton), Aug. 10, by James Roynon and Eldon Krider.
Brubacher-Weaver: Rachel Brubacher, Charlottesville, Va. (Kingview), and Michael Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va. (Lindale), Aug. 24, by Laban Peachey and Samuel O. Weaver.
Callaghan-Miller: Scott Callaghan and Marquessa Miller, Kidron, Ohio (Kidron), July 27, by Bill Detweiler.
Christian-Lehman: Todd Christian and Elonie Lehman, Dalton, Ohio (Kidron), Aug. 24, by Bill Detweiler and Herman Myers.
Coffman-Hunsinger: Lisa Coffman, Phoenixville, Pa. (Franconia), and Jonathan Hunsinger, Telford, Pa. (Franconia), Aug. 24, by John M. Ehst.
Denlinger-Eastman: Rachelle Denlinger, Millersburg, Ohio, and Lowell Eastman, Fairview, Mich., Aug. 3, by John Zimmerman.
Eichler-Wagler: Michelle Eichler, New Hamburg, Ont. (Steinmann), and Steven Wagler, Baden, Ont. (Steinmann), Aug. 17, by Herb Schultz.

Frey-Stuckey: Margaret Frey, Goshen, Ind. (First), and Douglas Stuckey, Archbold, Ohio (Lockport), July 27, by Ron Adams and Keith Leinbach.

Frey-Troyer: Dayton Frey, Goshen, Ind. (Pleasant View), and Gayle Troyer, Elkhart, Ind. (Belmont), Aug. 17, by Duane Beck and Ron Diener.

Gerig-Moyle: Kenneth Gerig, Albany, Ore. (Fairview), and Shanna Moyle, Morazia, Iowa (Nazarene), Aug. 10, by Terry Chapman.

Gomez-Mininger: Victoria Gomez, Waynesboro, Va. (Cornerstone), and Brian Mininger, Stuarts Draft, Va. (Cornerstone), July 27, by Greg Mayo, Jonas Mininger, and Mark Wenger.

Gotwals-Lehman: Susan Gotwals, Goshen, Ind. (Belmont), and Tim Lehman, Ely, Minn. (Faith), Aug. 11, by Duane Beck.

Harshberger-Miller: Brian Harshberger, Goshen, Ind. (Belmont), and Shelly Miller, Goshen, Ind. (Belmont), Aug. 24, by Duane Beck.

Holland-Mahoney: Christine Holland, Harleysville, Pa. (Salford), and Keith Mahoney (Catholic), Aug. 24, by Georges Thiers and Doug Jantzi.

Kip-Schwartz: John Kip, Kitchener, Ont., and Leanne Schwartz, Kitchener, Ont. (Steinmann), Aug. 10, by Herb Schultz.

Kolb-Roth: Steven Kolb, Lincoln, Neb. (Bellwood), and Kelly Roth, Milford, Neb. (Beth-El), July 6, by John C. King, Noah Kolb, and Cloy Roth.

Lemon-Wenger: Jeffrey Lee Lemon, Hesston, Kan., and Alicia Joy Wenger, Wayland, Iowa (Bethel), Aug. 16, by Kenneth Steckly.

Martin-Osborne: Sheldon Martin, Ephrata, Pa. (Ridgeview), and Naomi Miller Osborne, Akron, Pa. (Riverside), Aug. 18, by Robert Petersheim, Millard Osborne, and Paul Easton.

Martin-Schrock: Rachel Mae Martin, LaGrange, Ind. (Plato), and Cletus Jay Schrock, Wolcottville, Ind. (River of Life), Aug. 24, by Richard Martin (father of the bride), and Stephen Swihart.

Miller-Nash: Janelle Miller, Goshen, Ind. (Clinton Frame), and Corbin Nash, Middleburg Heights, Ohio, Aug. 10, by Robert L. Shreiner and Terry Diener.

Miller-Weaver: Stacey Miller and CherRonda Weaver, Apple Creek, Ohio (Kidron), Aug. 17, by Bill Detweiler.

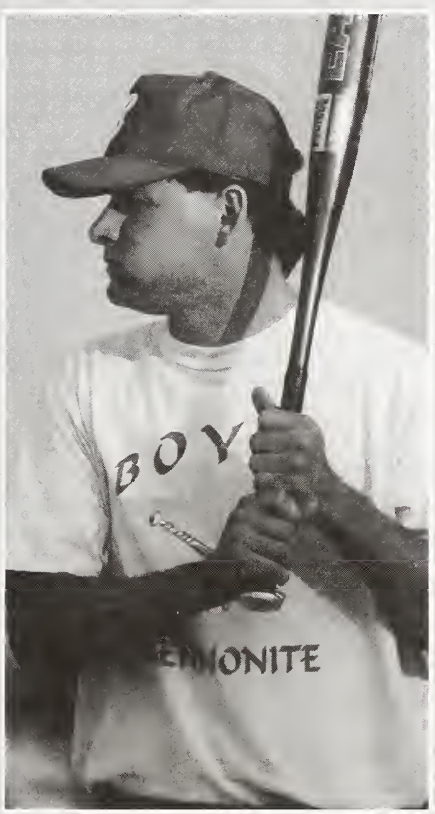
Pullman-Wideman: Daryl Pullman, Kitchener, Ont., and Gail Wideman, Kitchener, Ont. (Erb Street), July 30, by Renee Sauder.

Sims-Yoder: Tammy Sims and Chad Yoder, Weatherford, Okla. (West Union), Aug. 9, by Richard Zimmer.

Relief batting. Jay Everitt concentrates on a pitch in the 19th annual Mennonite Slo-Pitch Softball Tournament held Aug. 31-Sept. 2 at McMillon Park, Fort Wayne, Ind. Everitt played for the Boyertown (Pa.) Mennonite Church team. Over 60 teams participated in 156 games during the softball tournament that raised money for Mennonite Central Committee. The women's team from Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Millersburg, Ohio, won the women's division, and the A team from Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., won the men's division.

The softball tournament has raised over $30,000 in the past 18 years.

—David Hiebert



DEATHS

Albrecht, Anna M. Maust, 92, Sarasota, Fla. Born: March 5, 1904, Somerset Co., Pa., to Joseph and Lydia Maust. Died: Aug. 9, 1996, Fort Wayne, Ind. Survivors—children: Marilyn Delagrange, Bertha Plank, Joyce, J. Kenneth, Willis, Cecil; brothers and sister: Joseph and Edward Maust, Barbara Esch; 14 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Edwin Albrecht (husband). Funeral: Aug. 13, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, by Barry Loop. Burial: Manasota Memorial Park.

Barg, Helen Dyck, 83, Winnipeg, Man. Born: Jan. 15, 1913, Russia. Died: July 30, 1996, of heart failure. Survivors—children: Benno, Werner, Fred, Paul, Philip, Else, Dorothy Neufeld, Mary Roberts; brother and sister: Dietrich Dyck, Margaret Bergen. Predeceased by: George Barg (husband). Funeral: Aug. 7, Duchess Mennonite Church, by Charles E. Ramer. Burial: Duchess Cemetery.

Beck, Fern, 56, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Dec. 21, 1939, Archbold, Ohio, to Harley and Frances Klopfenstein Beck. Died: Aug. 22, 1996, of cancer. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Charles, Donald, Vern, Arlene Zaerr. Funeral: Aug. 25, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman, Lois Hartman, Charles Gautsche, and Diane Zaerr. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Cressman, Clayton S., 70, Plattsville, Ont. Born: Nov. 2, 1925, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Omar and Mary Ann Shantz Cressman. Died: Aug. 21, 1996, Toronto, Ont., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Gladys Bauman Cressman; children: Richard, Ralph, Kevin, Christine; sister: Ethel Woolner; 8 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Aug. 24, Nith Valley Mennonite Church, by Harold Schilk.

Kennel, Joseph A., 78, Albany, Ore. Born: Feb. 5, 1918, Albany, Ore., to Samuel and Kathryn Alliman Kennel. Died: Aug. 5, 1996, Albany, Ore., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Katie R. Kennel; children: Larry, Linda McCausland; sisters: Dorothy Ruby, Lola Roth; 2 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Aug. 10, Fairview Mennonite Church, by Al Burkey and Clarence Gerig.

Landis, Katie Kreider Newcomer, 91, Lititz, Pa. Born: April 26, 1905, Lancaster Co., Pa., to John W. and Katie Huber Kreider Newcomer. Died: Aug. 15, 1996, Landis, Pa. Survivors—children: Elvin N., Esther N. Landis, Mary K. Treis, Anna Mae Hummel; brother and sister: Amos K. Newcomer, Mary K. Hollinger; 11 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Noah O. Landis (husband). Funeral and burial: Aug. 17, Landis Valley Mennonite Church, by J. D. Landis, John Landis, and Thomas Horst.

Miller, Pete V., 92, LaGrange, Ind. Born: July 31, 1904, Plain City, Ohio, to Valentine and Lizzie Witver Miller. Died: Aug. 24, 1996, LaGrange, Ind., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Mary C. Borntrager Miller; children: Sarah Marie Wengerd, Elizabeth Ellen Hershberger, Mary Alice Setty, Katie Irene Ott, Edna Mae Malott, Odessa Sue, Leroy, Paul, Lloyd; 34 grandchildren, 56 great-grandchildren, 6 great-great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Plato Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: Aug. 28, Shore Mennonite Church, by Richard Martin and Jerry Rodman.

Otto, Edward J., 74, Kokomo, Ind. Born: Sept. 9, 1921, Arthur, Ill., to Jerry and Elizabeth Mast Otto. Died: Aug. 4, 1996, Kokomo, Ind. Survivors—wife: Ida Mae Overholt Otto; sons: Jerry, Kenneth, Ronald; brothers and sister: Albert, Freeman, Simon, Fred, Jerry, Verna Chupp; 4 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Laura Gingerich Otto (first wife). Congregational membership: Tourist Mennonite Church. Funeral: Aug. 7, Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, by T. Lee Miller and Floyd Sneary.

Newspaper

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Little girls and their journals

When I was nine, I wrote in my journal that I wished women were allowed to be pastors because I thought I had some good ideas. My journal entry of Aug. 10, 1983, ends on a rather resigned note: *It's hard to keep my ideas to myself. Oh well.*

What strikes me first about this curious entry is my easy confidence and assumption that the thoughts I wrote in those pages were worth not only writing in my journal but also sharing with others.

Yet I am struck even more by my unquestioning acceptance of the fact that because I was a girl, I couldn't be a pastor. I'm sure that my parents never told me that I couldn't be a minister because I am female, and I don't remember hearing it so explicitly outlined at my church either.

It is true that what goes unspoken is often more powerful than what is spoken. I didn't need to hear the specific words that public women leaders weren't welcome in Mennonite churches—I saw it all around me. To my nine-year-old eyes and ears, not hearing Mennonite women preach and never meeting a woman pastor in the churches around me was as clear a message that such things were impossible as if someone had sat me down and said I couldn't be a pastor.

I think that if I were nine today, I wouldn't end my entry with the same docile "Oh well." Since that August, a woman has served as moderator of the Mennonite Church, a woman has been named president of a Mennonite Church college, and it's very possible to visit a Mennonite church and hear a woman preach or lead worship. Our churchly discussions now include words of inclusion and encouragement of women's gifts, and we're finally paying attention to Gal. 3:28 and quoting it frequently: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

But all I need to do is glance through the ministerial directory of the *Mennonite Yearbook*—or the "Pastor Transitions" section of this magazine—to know that the promise in this verse is distant and that not much has changed since I was nine. It's still rare to find a woman's name outside of the parentheses behind her husband's name in the *Yearbook*, or to find a woman listed in *Gospel Herald* as having been licensed or ordained. Some conferences in our denomination still refuse to ordain women—or at least haven't done so. And to most nine-year-old girls, it's the same thing.

It also doesn't matter much to young girls what our conference statements say about the importance of using women's gifts or what our publications say about the equality of men and women in Christ. Arguments about the perils of actively seeking women for certain positions, the downfalls of political correctness, or the frustration of making sure women are represented on this or that committee—these don't mean a thing to young girls who pick up what's unsaid more than what is said. What does matter to them is seeing adult women speaking what they know of God to a church that listens, because one day these girls will decide if the Mennonite church is the place where they want to share their ideas.

In these days of change, it is important not to denigrate the valuable service of the men who hold ministerial positions in our denomination and the women in the parentheses behind them who minister in countless and often unacknowledged ways. Nor should we overlook the work being done by willing and gifted deaconesses and lay women who are not formally recognized by the denomination. The church is often led most profoundly and dynamically by people who have no "official" leadership position or title.

We do need to worry about keeping unity during a time when the newness of women in the pulpit is strange and threatening, because God's kingdom is larger than we will ever know.

But we also need to worry about our wide-eyed daughters and nieces who will draw their own conclusions about who can or cannot be involved in leading our church. We need to worry about the young girls who swing their legs too high and scribble on their bulletins during church but who still take in everything they see and hear—and who are going home to write about it in their journals.—*vsw*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Why we believe in peace and justice—for now, on earth

The church's evangelical mission and its concern for peace and justice are inseparable. We cannot do violence to those with whom we would share the gospel.

by Linda Gehman Peachey

Christian faith has often been defined in terms of certain beliefs about God, Jesus, and salvation from sin. What has not always been clear is how these beliefs relate to concerns for peace and justice in our world. Yet peace and justice are deeply rooted in the Bible and in three core affirmations of Christian faith.

Peace. One of the first affirmations which Christians make is that God loves me and all people in the world. Truly, this is a basic teaching in Scripture found in key passages like John 3:16. Unfortunately, we humans often put the emphasis on the first part of this assertion. God loves me or people like me: my family, my friends, my race, my class, my country. Throughout Scripture, however, God keeps trying to break through to us that God's love is not limited to me or my people but extends to even people I really don't like or people I consider enemies.

Numerous stories illustrate this concern. One of the most dramatic Old Testament stories tells of Jonah and his call to go to Nineveh. While this story is often read in terms of obedience to God's call, the real emphasis was on

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

My vision for the Mennonite church (5):
Congregations that are open to all . . . 6

MCC executive committee calls for halt to bombing of Iraq 9

Mount Zoar Baptist and MDS dedicate new church building 10

Our commitment to peace and justice continues to call us into areas of suffering and human need, identifying with those most disadvantaged in our world.

the fact that Jonah was called to witness to an enemy nation. The book of Nahum gives some sense of how the people of Israel felt about Nineveh, describing their great joy and relief upon hearing of Nineveh's destruction later in history.

The Assyrians were cruel enemies, and the fact that God could care about these people was not welcome news in Israel. No wonder Jonah wanted to flee in the other direction! Nevertheless, the book of Jonah describes God's love for these people, ending with this challenge to Jonah and his people: "And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?" (Jonah 4:11)

Other stories which emphasize God's love for all people come from the life of Jesus and his interaction with poor people, people with leprosy, tax collectors, women, Samaritans, and Gentiles. These were all people on the outside of Jewish faith and practice who could not or would not keep the law as understood by the religious leaders at that time. Jesus, however, relates to all of these people as if they were important to God. In fact, the Gospel writers seem to delight in contrasting the faith of these "outsiders" with the doubt or unbelief of the Pharisees and other religious leaders.

For instance, Nicodemus the Pharisee came to Jesus secretly in the middle of the night. In the very next chapter, Jesus met the Samaritan woman in full daylight. She in turn experienced such a conversion that she immediately called others to faith, and Jesus ended up staying two more days in that village.

This is undoubtedly one reason that the Jewish religious leaders became so upset with Jesus. He kept pushing the boundaries and reminding them that God's love included everyone, even those whom society would call "unclean" or the "enemy."

Such an inclusive love is still uncomfortable, for it calls Jesus' followers to resist being bound by any race, class, gender, or nation. It calls us to refuse participation in our nation's wars or in any other activity which would elevate one group of people over another. Indeed, this love calls God's people into new relationships and new settings of sharing our faith—as Peter and the early church soon did—with those from other races, other classes, other nations.

In this way, the church's evangelical mission and its concern for peace and justice are intertwined and inseparable. We cannot do violence to those with whom we would share God's love; and we cannot witness to people if we have been fighting against them.

One example comes from the country of Laos. Located next to Vietnam, Laos experienced much internal fighting as well as bombing by the U.S. during the Vietnam War. Because of the way mission and aid groups from the U.S. had supported their government's war policies, Laos was not eager to have many U.S. citizens around in the first decade after the war. Although a small U.S. diplomatic mission remained, the only U.S. groups initially permitted to establish aid programs were Mennonites and Quakers.

A major factor in this permission was the fact that these groups were conscientious objectors to participation in war, including the Vietnam War. The presence of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in turn allowed its workers to relate to the Lao Christian Church and to be a link to the wider Christian church at a time when the Lao church was quite isolated. Although overt mission activity was forbidden, they were able in many quiet ways to share that MCC's aid came from North American Christians who wanted to show their love and concern for people in need. As Lao Christian leaders noted, this witness helped them in their relationship to Lao society by showing that Christians cared for Lao people.

Justice. A second key affirmation of Christian faith is that God cares about our welfare, not just in the future in heaven, but also now, on earth. In teaching his disciples, Jesus taught them to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). If the earlier truth about God's all-inclusive love leads to an emphasis on peace, this truth will emphasize God's concern for justice.

Many Old Testament laws dealt with issues of social justice. For instance, one purpose of the Sabbath was to give laborers and even slaves and animals some rest on a regular basis. The Jubilee laws about forgiving debt, releasing slaves from bondage, and redistributing land were designed to free people from long-term destitution. Over and over again, the prophets pleaded with people to remember God's concern for the most vulnerable members of society, especially widows, orphans, and strangers. As they emphasized, God wants mercy more than sacrifice or worship in the temple.

Inclusive love is uncomfortable, for it calls Jesus' followers to resist being bound by any race, class, gender, or nation.

One obvious way in which Jesus showed God's love was in his healing ministry. In Jesus' time, illness and deformity were not only uncomfortable for people but also excluded people from the community of faith. Because of rigid purity codes and the association of illness with sin, those who were not whole were considered unclean sinners, to be avoided by those who were "clean." Jesus ignored these codes by touching those who had leprosy, those who were blind, and those who could not hear or speak. He even responded with compassion to the touch of a woman with an "unclean" flow of blood. By healing these people, he restored them to their families and communities. Thus, they were able to start life anew, whole in body as well as assured that God had forgiven them whatever sins they believed had led to their illness.

Jesus also exhorted his followers to share food and other resources freely and to respond to others as a good neighbor would. As with his healing ministry, Jesus was not only concerned that people have food in the physical sense but also that people affirm their common humanity through fellowship around a common table. So Jesus went about healing people and eating with them, even when they had failed to keep the law or were known to be sinners or outcasts.

The early church continued this commitment to wholeness and justice in their practices of healing and redistribution of goods. One example we often overlook is Paul's effort to collect an offering from the Gentiles for the Jerusalem church which was in need. Paul wrote a great deal about this offering and insisted on bringing it to Jerusalem, even though he was warned that he would be arrested if he did. Alan Kreider in his book, *Journey to Holiness,* mentions that excavations of some of the early church buildings show that as much room was given to storage space for redistribution of goods as was given to worship.

This commitment continues to call Christians into areas of suffering and human need. It calls us away from seeking status and privilege so that we might identify with those most disadvantaged in our world. It calls us to see the world through the eyes of those who have been excluded, to break with our society's "purity codes," and to participate in God's power to heal and restore.

In today's society, one of these "purity codes" is racism, a system which continues to exclude people from full fellowship in many communities, schools, and churches. Indeed, racism means that white people and people of color experience our society in very different ways. While European-Americans can go about their lives basically trusting the good will of others, African-Americans frequently experience harassment from police, store owners, neighbors, colleagues, and fellow students. While white people can basically expect our society's institutions to work for them, many people of color face discrimination and exploitation. Such truth calls, not only for compassion, but also for finding ways to dismantle this system of exclusion and allow everyone to participate in the wholeness which God intends for all.

Witness to the world. These concerns for peace and justice lead to another key Christian conviction: witnessing to others about God's love and calling them to conversion.

North American Christians have tended to

A belief in peace and justice calls not only for compassion but also for finding ways to dismantle a system of exclusion so that everyone can be whole in God.

focus this witness on individuals and to emphasize the need to repent of personal sin, such as dishonesty, sexual immorality, and substance abuse. As noted above, however, Jesus also called for repentance and change in the social structures which were exploiting and destroying people. He called on these institutions to turn away from their tendencies toward idolatry and to return to serving and worshiping the one and only true God.

In Jesus' time, two of the key institutions were the Sabbath and the temple. Again and again, Jesus challenged Sabbath laws and temple practices because they no longer served people as God had intended but rather functioned to exclude and oppress them, especially those who were poor, ill, disabled, or of non-Jewish background.

The story in Matt. 12:1-8 about plucking grain on the Sabbath is one such example. One of the provisions of the law was that travelers and poor people could eat grain or other produce in the field (Deut. 23:24-25). They were not to harvest this produce or take it home, yet were free to eat what they could glean as they passed through. By insisting that this could not be done on the Sabbath, the Pharisees failed to recognize that some people, perhaps even Jesus' disciples, were so destitute that they really needed to find food in this way, even on the Sabbath. Thus, although the Sabbath was originally designed to be a blessing—especially for poor people—it had now come to oppress them by denying them food when they needed it.

In the same way, the temple no longer functioned to bring people together with God. Rather, it had come to symbolize an oppressive system, used to enrich a powerful religious elite at the expense of the poor. Temple tithes were expected of people if they wanted to be considered good, observant Jews. When they could not pay, the implication was that they owed a debt to God. Jesus had little patience with the exploitation of this system and completely redefined one's obligations to God in more human terms. He taught his disciples to pray, "Forgive us our debts," not as we pay the temple tithe, but "as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). He also reminded the temple authorities of God's purpose for the temple: " 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a den of robbers" (Matt. 21:13).

In the same way, the church's witness to individuals today cannot be separated from its mandate to witness to the ruling powers of God's ultimate sovereignty over and care for all the earth. Again, the MCC experience in Laos is instructive. As MCC workers visited people and worked on projects to improve village life, they could not escape the constant reminders of the war in Indochina which had destroyed so much and made life so difficult for people. They also heard story after story of how unexploded bombs left in the soil from the U.S. bombing campaign continued to injure and kill people.

While people were grateful for material assistance, they also said repeatedly, "Go home and tell our story so that it will not happen again." In other words, it is not enough to clean up after a war. We need to prevent such destruction from happening in the first place. Sadly, these cries have been heard again and again, calling upon citizens of the world's powerful nations to address the principalities and powers which cause so much destruction and heartache to their brothers and sisters around the world.

Individual conversion and freedom from personal sin is important. Yet we need to hear again the New Testament's reminder that we also struggle "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness" (Eph. 6:12). The church must again accept this responsibility and find ways to embody God's truth so it can witness to and challenge the often oppressive institutions which govern human life on earth.

Today, as in the past, Jesus comes to us with the invitation, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15). Believe the good news that God loves you and all people. Believe that God's reign has come near to you, here on earth. Repent and turn aside from all those attitudes and actions which separate you from God, yourself, other people, and the earth. Join God's new community which is open to all people—even the enemy, even the very least in society. Join the community willing to fellowship with and care for all people, the community which refuses to serve any other power but God alone.

Linda Gehman Peachey, Lancaster, Pa., is coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries. She is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church.

Join in God's new community, one which is open to all people—even the enemy, even the very least in our society.

"It is my eager expectation . . . that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain."—**Phil. 1:20-21**

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

I have just read the tribute to Alicia Showalter Reynolds in the Aug. 27 issue of *Gospel Herald*. That dreadful event came to my mind many times since March. Being thousands of miles away, it was hard to process the grief I felt, especially for Alicia's family.

Your words and those of Shirley H. Showalter, Shirley Y. Brubaker, and Ed Stoltzfus helped me to acknowledge the anger I felt. They also helped bring the healing strength of love. Thank you for sharing those thoughts. Thanks be to God for Alicia's life and influence.

Catherine Mumaw
Kathmandu, Nepal

Learning to Know and Practice the Passions of God's Heart (Sept. 3). If Marlin Birkey represents the kind of ministers that the Hesston College Pastoral Ministries Program is producing, all of us can be encouraged for the kind of leadership our next generation is bringing. Kudos to Hesston College and their program and to Birkey for this wonderful article. Would that we all learn to know and practice the passions of God's heart.

Jim Brenneman
Pasadena, Calif.

I have followed closely the discussions in *Gospel Herald* on the Promise Keepers movement. Because the positive comments were largely from those who had attended and the questions from those who had not, I decided to attend one in Eugene, Ore.

I did not hear some of the negatives the accusers often bring. There was no gay bashing. At least 50 percent of the men on stage were persons of color; perhaps 5 percent of the audience were.

Wives and children were held up as persons to be loved, not lorded over. Men were encouraged to assume their God-mandated position of leadership in the home. What that meant was not carefully defined.

The theology was old-fashioned revival, blood atonement, and blood covenant. On the two occasions when an invitation was given, the response was vigorous and prolonged.

The mood was that of an athletic event, with cheers of "We love Jesus" echoing back and forth across the stadium. And the "wave" circled the oval, sometimes even out of control of the convention leaders.

But I did not feel nurtured by my experience. The general tenor of the meetings seemed to be very modern and high-tech, with the goal of getting men emotionally aroused and programmed for a conditioned response. To me this was out of character with a more reflective response to the good news.

I cast no judgment on Mennonite men who attend Promise Keepers and find encouragement there. But if we need to go there to be challenged to be loving men to our spouses, our families, and each other, something is lacking in what we are doing in our churches.

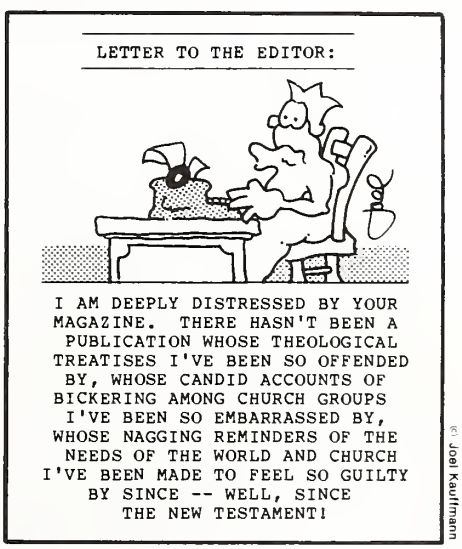
Perhaps the best challenge that I heard on that weekend was for men to get together in our home communities for further interaction and sharing. Thoughtfully done, that would be the best thing I could see happen.

Larry Eby
Siletz, Ore.

I want to affirm you for publishing the series "My Vision for the Mennonite church." As we approach the end of the millennium, the Mennonite church is at a crossroads, caught between the horns of inclusiveness and tradition, not quite knowing where to draw our boundaries as new people and ideas confront and stretch us. Thanks for risking the kind of writing that challenges our denomination with difficult issues.

Ruben Chupp
Wayland, Iowa

Pontius' Puddle



We only pick 'em, we don't draw 'em.—Editor

My vision for the Mennonite church (5):

Congregations that

We need an identity as a denomination. But let us be known as a people who follow Jesus and pursue peace —rather than to whom we were born.

by Noel Santiago

I envision a Mennonite church that worships and prays corporately and that reflects the image presented in Rev. 7:9-10: "After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' "

Most Mennonites are persons of deep spiritual disciplines—at the individual level. When it comes to the collective level, however, we struggle with how to approach God and our understanding of when Christ has spoken to us. I envision greater clarity coming to us through increased opportunities and places of interaction.

Closely connected to this clarity is the people in John's vision—people of every nation, tribe, and language. Clearly, God was present at this gathering. God cannot be limited to a certain style or belief, yet one of the ways I have experienced Christ speaking to a body of believers has been in those settings where people literally believe that Christ does this.

I have observed this openness most often in congregations that are made up of people from countries other than the U.S.—among Indonesians, Hondurans and other Central Americans, Native Americans, and African-Americans. It seems that the worship style of most of these groups allows for more spontaneity and a dynamic move of the Spirit.

Perhaps it is an issue of theological understanding or of cultural or emotional makeup. Yet I hope that many of these groups will have a greater influence in our understanding of our relationship to Christ as a body of believers. We are not used to listening to these people. Will we heed what God is saying through them?

A final piece of this vision is inviting people to God's kingdom. Call it evangelization, church planting, starting communities of faith, or some other name—there is "a multitude of people that no one could count." This multitude speaks of a church that is inviting and reaching out to all the world. I think again of our Indonesian, Hispanic, and Hmong believers who are inviting persons to faith in Christ Jesus.

I think especially of Amor Viviente in New Orleans, La., and of pastor Hector Urbina, whose Spanish-speaking church is reaching out to English-speaking neighbors and starting cell groups in English. I think of Homestead Mennonite Church in Miami, Fla., with pastor Walter Sawatzky; they are reaching out to their Spanish-speaking neighbors—of Sutanto Adi and of Jemaat Kristen Indonesian and district-conference partnerships which have allowed them to reach Indonesians all over North America.

My vision for the next 10 years is a church that continues to build on that which is to be fulfilled and which labors alongside the Holy Spirit of God to fulfill God's kingdom purposes. I envision a church that, with one confession professed by a multitude of people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, gathers around God's throne to worship.

Noel Santiago is a consultant in the Evangelism and Church Development Department of Mennonite Board of Missions. He and his family attend Clinton Frame Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

by Terry Shue

Folklore has it that, if you want to catch a monkey, a clear jar and an orange will do the trick. The opening must be just large enough to allow an orange to be dropped in. When the monkey sees the irresistible orange, he will put his hand in the jar for a tasty snack. The problem comes for the simple animal when

are open to all

there is not room enough to remove the orange in his hand. The monkey refuses to let go of the orange even at the cost of his freedom. Snared only by his unwillingness to let go of an insignificant snack, the creature risks great loss.

The Mennonite church stands at an exciting time. We find ourselves again learning and struggling with what it means to have a Mennonite understanding of being a Christian. Gone are the days when that understanding is defined by outward appearances, geographic location, last name, or ethnic background. Though at times each of those items may have served the church and held us together, they are now a barrier for the next stage of the Mennonite church.

Yet every now and then I find individuals and even congregations who still carry the understanding that the Mennonite church is about ethnicity. For them being a Mennonite is defined more by genealogy than by theology.

Indeed, it is with some personal sadness that I bid those days farewell, for they were comfortable and clearly defined. For even with the uncommon last name of Shue, I have enjoyed numerous rounds of the "Mennonite game" usually trying to connect me to a family in Florida I have yet to meet. But alas, these warm fuzzies have little to do with the church of the New Testament or our theological distinctiveness.

Over 300 Mennonite Church congregations have participated in the Living In Faithful Evangelism (LIFE) process in which we have intentionally tried to share our faith with those who have no church. One of the hurdles for many established churches is to welcome into the family of faith persons from diverse backgrounds on a level playing field. Ethnicity has never been easy for the church to let go of. The book of Acts tells the story well—what was once a hallmark of our identity is now a sin of arrogance, damaging the church and our mission to the world. As Peter finally realizes, "Now I understand that God does not play favorites" (Acts 10:34). What he finally understood and what every generation must relearn is that the church is not an institution based upon ethnicity.

My wife, Kay, and I have three daughters whom we hope will grow to love the church as much as we do. But the church I would prefer to extend to them as they enter into adulthood is a church in which we are defined by what we believe and how that belief affects the way we live more than where and to whom we are born.

Yes, we need to have an identity as a denomination so we are known and we know who we are. But let us be known as a people who follow Jesus, who value the community of faith, and who pursue peace rather than by to whom we are born. Without such self-awareness, we will inevitably be sucked into the mainstream of evangelicalism with a watered-down pop theology to fit the day.

With integration, urban migration, and the rediscovery of the mission of the church that includes evangelism, who we are will continue to change. I look forward to the new thing God is doing in the Mennonite church, while at the same time I realize that some old things will pass away. To the degree we are able to let go of ethnic identity in the church, God has a great work for us. It is not easy for a nostalgic church to let go of ethnicity, but then neither is the orange for a curious monkey.

Terry Shue, Stryker, Ohio, is pastor of the Pine Grove Mennonite Church. He also serves on the evangelism commission of Ohio Conference.

by Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower

Vision: Healing and Hope lifts up the call to "grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace." My dream is that in 10 years from now, many such communities will make up the Mennonite church. Recent experiences have helped me catch a glimpse of how these communities might look.

Multiethnic communities of grace, joy, and peace. Nine churches in Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference gathered for a Festival of Praise one Saturday in November. Four languages were spoken by the people present—English, Hmong, Spanish, and Mandarin. We sang together, listened to God's Word in different languages, prayed, ate, and laughed together. We heard what God is doing in each congregation. A pastor asked for prayer for a struggling congregation. Another congregation told of its near death and rebirth. One congregation celebrated the arrival of a new pastor. A brother from another congregation told of the life-changing work Christ is doing in his life. As we waited for dinner to be served, a group of Hispanic and Hmong men stood to-

Most Mennonites are persons of deep spirituality. But collectively we struggle with how to approach God and understand when Christ has spoken.

gether, laughing and trying to communicate in English.

On that Saturday, I was part of a community of grace, joy, and peace. I dream that as North America becomes more ethnically diverse, we will find ways to experience that diversity in our Mennonite communities of faith. I dream that we will find grace, joy, and peace as we discover and celebrate that we have become one in Christ.

Basic Christian communities of grace, joy, and peace. A Gallup survey several years ago identified six basic spiritual needs. Three of the six had to do with community: the need for a sense of community and deeper relationships, the need to be appreciated and respected, and the need to be listened to and heard.

Peace Community Church—Mennonite in Clovis, Calif., has a dream of becoming a church that can meet those needs. Peace Community Church is a network of small groups. Called home groups, these are made up of six to twelve people who gather in Christ's presence to worship, care for each other, grow as disciples of Christ, and be equipped for ministry in the church and in the world. The home groups meet weekly and then gather regularly for worship and celebration.

Stories of healing in these home groups abound. One couple found encouragement as they struggled to mend a troubled marriage, moving from separation to recommitment. Another couple moved into our city and became part of a home group; members of the group helped each of them to find a job. A family was in crisis when their teenage son had an emergency hospitalization; their home group surrounded them with prayer and support. Members of a home group felt God's presence as a man acknowledged his longing for a renewed relationship with God. A woman was seeking God's guidance in major life choices as well as in day-to-day living; her home group helped her listen to God's voice. Another woman invited a friend to come and experience the love she felt in the home group; "I've never been part of a group where I felt so cared for and where I really felt like I belonged," she said.

As people develop deep relationships with God and with each other, the home groups become places where we experience God's healing and hope. They prepare us to be channels of God's healing and hope for others. I dream that as our society becomes increasingly secular and impersonal, there will be many of these small basic Christian communities in the Mennonite church where people find healing and hope as they experience God's grace, joy, and peace.

Clare Ann Ruth-Heffelbower is copastor of Peace Community Church—Mennonite in Clovis, Calif., and an area minister in Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference.

Your response is welcome to this series, in which 25 leaders give specific ideas on where the Mennonite church should be headed and how it might get there. Please keep your responses short—no more than 150-200 words. They will appear in future issues in "Readers Say."

Send them to "My Vision," Gospel Herald, *616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683.*

E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com

by Larry Wilson

Many of us wish that we could leapfrog over the next 10-15 years because we know that the challenge of shaping a Mennonite church that we can live with—and one that Jesus Christ would also approve—will not be an easy task.

My hope for this future Mennonite church is that it will be known for the way we respect and trust each other in spite of our diversity. As a pastor of a dual-conference congregation, I believe we see and experience this closeness and fellowship most of the time. But sometimes we're not sure we want to be associated with folks who are so different from us on certain issues.

When we keep our eyes focused on Christ as Lord, keep in serious conversation with Scripture, and remember that we are in fact brothers and sisters, we live out this vision with much more integrity.

Larry Wilson is pastor of First Mennonite Church, Urbana, Ill., and president of Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

MCC executive committee calls for halt to bombing of Iraq

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—As U.S. President Clinton dispatched 5,000 more troops to the Persian Gulf on Sept. 13, the executive committee of MCC U.S. faxed the White House a letter imploring Clinton to stop military action. The committee held meetings at the Mennonite Central Committee headquarters, Sept. 12-13.

Baghdad said Sept. 13 it would not attack planes in the no-fly zones, but Washington reacted with skepticism, reports Reuters news service.

In his report to the U.S. committee, J. Daryl Byler of MCC's Washington office said military spending was the number one concern raised by constituents of the office in a recent survey. He said the U.S. government, the world's largest arms exporter, spends $7 million annually to subsidize its international arms sales.

The Sept. 13 letter follows.

Dear President Clinton: We implore you to immediately halt any further U.S. missile attacks or bombing raids against the people of Iraq. According to a recent U.N. report, some 500,000 Iraqi children have died in the last six years due to U.N.-imposed economic sanctions. Let our nation not contribute further to this horrible human suffering through additional acts of aggression.

Mennonites and Brethren in Christ are from a faith tradition that calls us to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44), and teaches us that only good is powerful enough to overcome evil (Rom. 12:21). We believe that peace cannot be built with weapons of war or threats of violence, but only with plowshares of justice, respect, and truthful dialogue (Isaiah 2:4).

• • •

But even if one does not accept this theological understanding of the "peace church" tradition, we are compelled to ask: "What possible good can come from further provocative violent acts? How will more missiles make the Gulf region more stable? Are U.S. oil interests in the region really more valuable than the Iraqi lives that will be snuffed out when a missile misses its military target? On what moral ground will the United States stand in the future when it challenges other countries not to engage in unilateral and unprovoked attacks?"

We do not condone the violent acts of President Saddam Hussein. But violence is never uprooted by more violence. At best, violence represses violence for the moment—only to see it rear its ugly head in more vigorous forms. Indeed, we fear that more violence against President Hussein will only strengthen his grip on the people of Iraq.

• • •

In our view, true leadership has little to do with exercising military might against Iraq. It has more to do with the vision and courage to take steps to diffuse the dangerous escalation of rhetoric and military activity that hover like ominous clouds of death over the people of the Gulf region.

We have heard you say that you will build a bridge to the 21st century. Will that bridge more likely be built with diligent diplomacy and confidence-building measures, or with words of war and acts of aggression?

Meeting this day as an executive committee in Akron, Pennsylvania, we commit ourselves to pray for a nonviolent resolution to the current hostilities.

Sincerely,
MCC U.S. Executive Committee

Service with a smile. *Philadelphia, Pa. (MCC)*—Esther Dich shares a smile with a child in a summer community program at her church, Abundant Life Chinese Mennonite. A participant in the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Summer Service program, Dich spent 10 weeks this summer leading children in Bible Study, Chinese lessons, singing, and other activities.

Leaders trained to respond to clergy misconduct

Des Moines, Iowa—How to implement the 1993 "Guidelines for Discipline Regarding Ministerial Credentials" adopted by the leadership offices of the Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) was the question addressed at a gathering of leaders from 11 states and provinces at the Des Moines Mennonite Church.

How to respond. Eighty MC and GC leaders met Sept. 5-7 to be trained in responding to signed complaints about sexual misconduct by a clergy person.

"Don't you dare attempt to do this work except on your knees," was the caution of Chilton Knudsen in her opening remarks. Knudsen, pastoral care officer for the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, led the group in an intensive orientation to issues of misuse of power and ways to apply biblical principles of truthfulness, accountability, compassion, transformation, and justice. She also spent time on prevention measures.

Separate training tracks were held for three work areas: initial contact persons, investigative teams, and conference ministers and ministerial and leadership commission members.

According to the guidelines, initial contact persons receive the charge and advise the complainant of various options to consider before making a signed complaint. Conference ministers and commission members are charged with forming an investigative team of trained individuals and making sure support people are in place for the accused, the complainant, families of both, and the affected congregation.

Conference ministers and commission members also arrange for legal and process consultants, recommend counseling for affected parties, arrange for pastoral leadership of the congregation while a pastor is on leave of absence, and decide on action as a result of the conclusions of the investigative team.

—Marilyn Kern

The church that MDS built:

New Mount Zoar Baptist building dedicated as 'monument to God's grace'

Boligee, Ala. (Meetinghouse)—With a contented smile and surrounded by cars, Deacon Bobby Davis watched the never-ending stream of people fill the Mount Zoar Baptist Church yard.

"We got three churches here already," he said with a hint of amazement. "I feel like shouting right here."

Eight months ago, the Mount Zoar yard was covered with charred ruins. The church building was burned on Jan. 11, one of three local churches to be destroyed in a rash of suspicious fires at African-American churches.

But on Sept. 8, an estimated 200 people filled the tiny sanctuary to overflowing, and at least that many more gathered outside. They had come for the dedication of Mount Zoar's new church building, erected with the significant assistance of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS).

Because of financial assistance from around the world, the 35-member church was rebuilt this summer with the help of some 300 MDS volunteers who put in 10,000 hours of work.

Crammed service. "This church stands as a monument to God's love, as a monument to the power of God's grace. . . as a monument to partnering among God's people," MDS board chair Eldon King told the gathering.

The rollicking, two-and-a-half-hour dedication service started with King cutting the ribbon and Tom Smucker, MDS assistant program coordinator, unlocking the building.

The sanctuary, with seating for 120, was crammed with people sitting and standing in the aisles, around the edges, and in the choir loft. The service was repeatedly punctuated by shouts of "Amen!" and "Yes!" and singing by the congregants as more than a dozen speakers made presentations. The recurring theme was that God is good—and so is MDS.

Worshipers celebrate during the dedication service at Mount Zoar Baptist Church, Boligee, Ala., on Sept. 8. Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers helped to rebuild the church that was burned by arson this year.

"This is one of the greatest groups in the world," outgoing Boligee mayor Buddie Lavender said of MDS. "They'll lift you up, they'll bring you home."

Thomas Gilmore, a minister from Ensley who gave the service's main address, said, "The person who torched this church didn't know about the Mennonite disaster teams."

Because of the national and international attention given to Mount Zoar, Gilmore said the congregation now has a responsibility to support others nationally and internationally.

"You are no longer a little church," he said. "This world has been introduced to you and. . . you got to be concerned about your brothers and sisters."

About 100 green ribbons were strung across the front of the church and hung in the fellowship hall. The ribbons were sent from North American Mennonites and Brethren in Christ, mostly congregations, as part of a campaign organized by Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Long-term maintenance funds. The financial support from a myriad of organizations and individuals worldwide covered the $130,000 Mount Zoar building. MDS has received more than $70,000 in contributions for the project, which has been or will be used for on-site operating and travel expenses, other MDS work in Boligee, a tithe to MCC U.S.'s racism-awareness work, and a video on the MDS youth program.

MDS also left $10,000 with Mount Zoar for long-term maintenance and insurance for the new church. The previous building was not insured.

—Rich Preheim

People gather outside the new Mount Zoar Baptist Church building on Sept. 8. Some 300 Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers put in an estimated 10,000 hours of work to build the new structure.

Churches in Indiana hold services outside

Goshen, Ind.—At least 17 Mennonite churches in Indiana and Michigan held services outdoors recently to show solidarity with those whose churches were burned in a wave of arsons that destroyed African-American churches this year.

Many of the parking lot services were held on Sept. 8—the same day as the dedication of the newly-built Mount Zoar Baptist Church in Boligee, Ala. Mount Zoar was built with the help of Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers (see story on page 10).

'As real as possible.' Dave Heusinkveld, pastor at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, suggested the idea at the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference annual meeting in Gaylord, Mich., after his congregation heard about outdoor services held by the Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

"It was a wonderful way to clarify that the church is the people and not the building," says Heusinkveld of the service at his church. He added that a Ku Klux Klan rally held in Goshen on Aug. 17 gave "incentive to say that racism is not a part of the kingdom."

Most members of at least two churches—Pleasant Oaks in Middlebury and Assembly in Goshen—were surprised to arrive to services held in the parking lot. Barry Schmell, pastor of Pleasant Oaks, made it look like the sanctuary had been burned. When church members arrived on July 28, they found yellow tape around the front doors, boards on the windows, and a tarp on the roof.

"I wanted to make it as real as possible, so we might feel the same pain," Schmell says.

Peace Tax Fund Bill waits another year

Washington, D.C. (NCPTF)—The National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund (NCPTF) has learned there will be no hearing on the Peace Tax Fund Bill this year.

A Peace Tax Fund would allow conscientious objectors to pay taxes in full and have the part equal to the current military portion paid into a fund for nonmilitary purposes.

The news was conveyed during a meeting between Peace Tax Fund Bill lobbyists and an aide to Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) during the last week of August. The Campaign made a Senate hearing on the bill its top priority for 1996. Supporters hoped for a hearing before lead sponsor Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) retires in November.

Strategy for the future. With time running out, Peace Tax Fund lobbyists arranged a meeting with Evan Liddiard, the tax aide for Sen. Orrin Hatch. The Subcommittee on Taxation, chaired by Sen. Hatch, is the committee targeted by supporters for the hearing. In the meeting, Liddiard told the lobbyists that any hearing before the election would be highly politicized.

While closing the door on a hearing this year, the aide increased the possibility for one in the next Congress. Peace Tax Fund lobbyists and Hatch's aide spent much of the meeting developing a strategy to position the bill for a hearing in the new Congress.

Marian Franz, executive director of the NCPTF, was pleased with the outcome. "At this point, we think our strategy for a hearing in the future is preferable to a rushed hearing this year," she said.

In lobbying for the bill, Franz was joined by representatives from Mennonite Central Committee, the Baptist Joint Committee for Public Affairs, Friends Committee on National Legislation, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Unitarian Universalist Association.—*Eirick Harteis*

Mennonites join protest against death penalty

Salem, Ore.—Representatives from several Oregon Mennonite churches joined protesters as the state performed its first execution in 34 years. Opponents of the death penalty staged a vigil at the Oregon State Penitentiary here on Sept. 5, singing and praying as convicted murderer Douglas Wright was executed by lethal injection. At the same site, capital punishment advocates cheered Wright's death. In all, the crowd numbered around 300.

The execution coincided with a previously planned march, sponsored by the Oregon Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (OCAPD). Some 45 participants marched 45 miles from Portland to Salem to proclaim that capital punishment is racist, classist, arbitrarily applied, and does not deter crime.

'You just have to walk.' "Sometimes in a struggle, you just have to walk," explains OCAPD secretary Les Gustafson-Zook, a member of Portland Mennonite Church. "When voices are not being heard, a nonviolent way to continue the struggle is to walk."

Several of the marchers were family members of murder victims; many of these family members spoke in Salem churches before attending the Sunday closing rallies at the state capitol and penitentiary. These included Marietta Jaeger, whose seven-year-old daughter was kidnapped from a Montana camping site and murdered, and Sam Reese Sheppard, whose mother was killed in Ohio and his father imprisoned for 12 years before being found innocent.

"In debates about capital punishment, the immediate argument is, what about the victims?" Gustafson-Zook says. "We need for people to hear the story of victims who have found healing and not vengeance."

—*Cathleen Hockman-Wert*

MDS completes extra projects in Boligee

Boligee, Ala. (Meetinghouse)—An ample supply of workers and funds allowed the ministry of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) to extend beyond Mount Zoar Baptist Church.

MDS came to Boligee to rebuild the church, one of three in the area destroyed by suspicious fires. (The other two churches were Quaker projects.) But MDS did more this summer: built a church addition, replaced a church roof, and built four wheelchair ramps at private homes.

Because the $130,000 cost of Mount Zoar's new church was covered by non-MDS contributions, MDS had extra money to spend on the projects— $15,000, to be exact. The organization has received more than $70,000 in contributions for the work in Boligee.

The extra labor came primarily from the 10 youth groups—about 200 workers—which spent a week in Boligee as part of MDS's summer youth program.

—*Rich Preheim*

MCC drama troupe presents stories of racism

Reedley, Calif. (MCC)—Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches and summer camps had a glimpse of racism through the eyes of seven people of color this summer. Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) traveling summer drama troupe toured four western states with their program, "Our Stories, Our Lives," June 10-Aug. 18.

The project, intended to raise awareness of racism, featured seven young adults from Mennonite churches across the United States. Three were Hispanic and four were African-American.

The troupe started with a two-week creative session in which the actors talked and wrote about their own experiences of racism. The group worked under the direction of Gary Wood, executive director of PeaceTroupe, an organization that uses cultural arts to address justice issues.

"We were asked to think about life experiences dealing with racism," explains troupe member Sherilee Williams of College Hill Mennonite Church in Tampa, Fla. "And then Gary assigned us to write a scene about a certain sort of racism relating to a theme, such as power. At the end of the first week, we had 70 scenes."

During the second week, they narrowed the program down to five short skits that they performed in combination with several readings and poems.

The troupe used a "forum theater" style in which they presented a sketch and then invited the audience to discuss how racism had been portrayed in that situation. After a brief discussion, they invited members of the audience to take the place of the central figure in the skit and to try out their ideas for solving the problem.

The audience involvement kept the material alive for the actors throughout their 32 performances. "It's so interesting to see how we can produce this same scene over and over again, but in every place we go, they come up with so many different ideas," says team leader Erasmo Quintanilla of El Buen Pastor Mennonite Brethren Church in Orange Cove, Calif.

Audience members would come on stage to play the part of the person being discriminated against or of a bystander they felt could have played a more active role in standing with the scene's protagonist.

"Playing the role of a helpful bystander can help people recognize their involvement in the problem of racism and learn how they can become part of the solution," says MCC staff associate for racism awareness Jody Miller Shearer, one of the troupe's organizers. The forum theater model "forces people to realize we can do as much damage by doing nothing as by being actively racist," he notes.

—Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

A drama troupe performs at a beach in San Diego, Calif., as part of the annual meeting of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference.. They are (left to right): Sherilee Williams, Gary Wood, Felipe Hinojosa, Maribel Ramirez, Enica Maclin, Shyleen Wesley (standing), Lisa White (kneeling), and Erasmo Quintanilla.

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- **MDS organizes cleanup.** Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) units in the Carolinas, Virginia, and Georgia are organizing to help clean up wind and rain damage caused by Hurricane Fran. The storm swept through the southern states the first week of September, snapping trees, tearing off roofs, and swelling rivers. MDS investigators who traveled to the damaged areas say it is too soon to determine a longer-term MDS response.

- **Moss donates prints.** World-renowned artist Pat Buckley Moss has donated 1,000 prints of "A Community Spirit," a new limited-edition work, to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The total purchase price of the prints, each valued at $200 (U.S.), will go to fund MCC's work in Africa.

- **EMU named by *U.S. News.*** Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., was named by *U.S. News and World Report* in its annual ranking of the best colleges and universities in the United States. EMU was ranked seventh in the South in the "regional liberal arts colleges." The ranking is based on selectivity, faculty resources, financial resources, retention, and alumni satisfaction.

- **GC cited in two magazines.** Goshen (Ind.) College (GC) was recently cited in two national magazines. For the eighth time in nine years, GC was counted among the best colleges in the United States by *U.S. News and World Report*. GC is also listed 14th in the nation in *Money* magazine's college guide for "best values when ranked by the average amount actually paid by students after financial aid is deducted from the official listed price."

- **Scholarship offered.** A new scholarship fund to encourage women to enter careers in science is being established at Goshen (Ind.) College. The Alicia Showalter Reynolds Women in Science Scholarship offers $2,500 awards to women in the sciences in memory of Showalter Reynolds, who was killed earlier this spring. Established by her husband Mark Reynolds, and parents, Harley and Sadie Showalter, with the goal of giving two awards each year, the endowed scholarship will first be presented in 1997 to a GC junior.

Voluntary Service workers begin terms. *Harrisburg, Pa. (EMM)*—Fifteen participants recently completed training at Harrisburg (Pa.) Discipleship Center to begin one-year Voluntary Service assignments with Eastern Mennonite Missions Discipleship Ministries.

First row *(left to right)*: Darcy Zehr to Harrisburg, Pa.; Dimitri Schwarz and Colina Pennington to Birmingham, Ala.; Melissa Lapp (holding Nathan) and Paul Lapp to Americus, Ga.; and Jason Martin to Immokalee, Fla.

Second row: Darlene Mast to Immokalee, Fla.; Mikael Wiens to Birmingham, Ala.; Daniel Steffens to Immokalee, Fla.; and Brian Kilheffer to Americus, Ga.

Third row: Erich Radtke to Americus, Ga.; Diana Hackman and Edmund Dueck to Boston, Mass.; Jon Rush to Immokalee, Fla.; and Joao Climaco Das Chagas to Birmingham, Ala.

- **New appointments:**

Gwen Groff, staffperson of Mennonite Central Committee U.S.'s Women's Concerns.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Beryl Jantzi was installed as lead pastor at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church on Sept. 10.

Melvin Leidig began on Jan. 1 as interim pastor at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Phil Kniss was installed as pastor of Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Sept. 1.

Joe Miller was installed as pastor of Mountain View Fellowship, Roaring Branch, Pa., on Sept. 1.

Wayne North began as part-time interim pastor at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Sept. 9.

- **Coming events:**

Annual spirituality retreat weekend, Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa., Oct. 4-6. Marci Springer will speak on "The Stages of Spiritual Growth." Information and reservations available from 800 822-7505.

Third Christian Peacemaker Congress, Luther Place Memorial Church, Washington, D.C., Dec. 27-30. Sponsored by Christian Peacemaker Teams and New Call to Peacemaking. Keynote speaker is Lucius Walker, founder of Pastors for Peace. Information and registration available from 312 455-1199 or 717 859-1958.

Inauguration of Shirley Hershey Showalter, Goshen (Ind.) College, April 5, 1997. Showalter will be installed as the 14th president of Goshen College.

- **New books:**

Moving Beyond Awareness: A Model for Multicultural Education and Curriculum Infusion, edited by Zenebe Abebe, details Goshen (Ind.) College's efforts toward multiculturalism. The 44-page book outlines programs including recruitment efforts aimed at particular groups and resources for students, faculty, and staff. Available from 219 535-7548.

- **New resources:**

Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love: Commitments for Mennonites in Times of Disagreement is based on a resolution passed by the delegate body at Wichita '95. The four-page document designed to help congregations and institutions use the commitments is being mailed to congregations. Additional copies are available from the Peace and Justice Committee, 330 683-6844. A color poster is also available.

- **Job openings:**

Academic dean, Steinbach (Man.) Bible College. Responsibilities include administration of academic affairs and student ministries, leadership of curriculum development and for teaching faculty, coordination of activities of various departments, and some teaching. Position opens Aug. 1, 1997. Submit application with résumé and cover letter to Stan Plett, president, Steinbach Bible College, PO Box 1420, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0.

Administrator, Sarasota (Fla.) Christian School. Qualifications include graduate degree in education or related field and administrative experience. Send résumé and references to Nora Hess, 7462 Castle Dr., Sarasota, FL 34240.

Counseling and guidance program head, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University. Faculty responsibilities include heading the graduate level school counseling and guidance program. More information and job description available from academic vice president Howard J. Loewen, 209 453-2023.

Dean of professional studies division, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University. Responsibilities include curriculum development and review and leadership in continuing education. More information and job description available from academic vice president Howard J. Loewen, 209 453-2023.

Dean of undergraduate division, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University. Responsibilities include faculty and curriculum development and review and leadership for undergraduate faculty through five divisional directors. More information and job description available from academic vice president Howard J. Loewen at 209 453-2023.

Director of development and advancement, Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore. Full-time responsibilities include planning and implementing development activities and strategies, managing several endowment and development committees, overseeing fundraising, and directing student recruitment program. Send letter of interest and résumé

to Eric Martin, 9045 Wallace Rd. NW, Salem, OR 97304.

Director of music, North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind. Responsibilities include coordinating worship music and choirs and meeting with worship committee. One-quarter-time position begins Jan. 1, 1997. Applications due Nov. 16. Contact Judy Hochstedler at 219 773-3891.

Executive director, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Akron, Pa. Qualifications include membership in a Mennonite or Brethren in Christ congregation. Deadline for inquiries and applications is Oct. 18. More information from Rich Garber, search committee chair, 208 467-3519.

Physical plant supervisor, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Responsibilities include coordinating grounds, maintenance, and housekeeping functions. Housing provided. Application and job description available from LMCC, Rt. 5, Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666.

Prayer ministries coordinator, Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa. Qualifications include commitment to prayer ministry, organizational and administrative skills, and ability to teach and communicate through writing. Begins in November. Discipleship Ministries experience preferred. Send résumé to Keith Blank, PO Box 628, Salunga, PA 17538.

Receptionist, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. Responsibilities include relating to guests through phone, personal, and written communication. Clerical skills required; housing provided. Application and job description available from LMCC, Rt. 5, Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666.

Secretary, Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa. Responsibilities include word processing using Word Perfect, mail processing, and other secretarial tasks. Qualifications include typing and proofreading skills and attention to detail. Position opens in November. Send résumé to Keith Blank, PO Box 628, Salunga, PA 17538.

• **Change of address:**

First Mennonite Church, 4601 Knollton Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46228.

NEW MEMBERS

Bay Shore, Sarasota, Fla.: Tom Cannella, Mary Cannella, Kirby Sniffen, and Anita Sniffen.

Bellwood, Milford, Neb.: Marlin and Betta Kym, Jim and Roxie Blowers, Lanny and Bonnie Stauffer, and Tony Roth.

Hernley, Manheim, Pa.: Timothy Forry.

Hopedale, Ill.: Marci Litwiller and Ben Litwiller.

Lowville, N.Y.: Paul Widrick.

Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.: Philip L. Kniss and Irene Kniss.

Spring Mount, Pa.: Eileen Viau and Odena Detweiler.

Trissels, Broadway, Va.: Mike Frazier and Sara Frazier.

Zion, Hubbard, Ore.: Randy Lapp and Carol Lapp.

BIRTHS

Bauman, Marcy Kuepfer and Glenn, London, Ont., Lucas (first child), Feb. 28.

Beckler, Karen Glick and Carl, Granville, N.Y., Benjamin Christian (fourth child), Aug. 20.

Breidigan, Mary Essick and Steven, Douglassville, Pa., Rachel Marie (first child), Aug. 30.

Cameron, Kristen Darlington and Don, Yellowknife, N.T., Liam Gordon (first child), June 6.

Cannon, Dawn and Steve, Millbank, Ont., Jesse (second child), March 15.

Franz, Janet and Raymond, Newton, Kan., Shannon Faina, born Feb. 18, 1989, and Lauren Alevtina, born Oct. 18, 1990 (first and second children), received for adoption Aug. 15, 1996.

Friesen, Marcia LeFevre and Jon, Newton, Kan., Jaecy Edward Lee (second child), Aug. 25.

Hange, Maren Tyedmers and Roy, Damascus, Syria, Karina Miriam (first child), Aug. 23.

Harris, Susan Whitt and Dale, Newport News, Va., Jessica Marie (third child), Aug. 27.

Hunter, Donna Kuepfer and Anthony, Nepean, Ont., Bradley Anthony (first child), April 11.

Kuepfer, Ellen and Paul K., Listowel, Ont., Colton Paul (fourth child), July 18.

Martin, Janelle Nofziger and Grant, Goshen, Ind., Edwin Alvin (first child), Aug. 21.

Martin, Paula Schmidt and Troy, Milford, Neb., Christian Ellis (second child), June 7.

Mast, Gina Spence and David, Wooster, Ohio, Kent Michael (third child), Aug. 20.

Nussbaum, Stacy Kanagy and Steve, Dalton, Ohio, Melissa Ann (first child), Aug. 20.

Paynter, Johanna Lapp and Ray, Harrisonburg, Va., Kourtnee Renee (first child), Aug. 29.

MARRIAGES

Allen-Eaton: Timothy P. Allen, Columbus, Ohio (Neil Avenue), and Rosalie Kay Eaton, Columbus, Ohio (Baptist), June 14, by Paul Reimer.

Barker-Dickhaut: Beth Barker, Lincoln, Neb. (Bellwood), and Rob Dickhaut, Lincoln, Neb., Sept. 8, by Marlin Kym.

Bodeen-Roth: Cheryl Bodeen, Milford, Neb., and Jered Roth, Milford, Neb. (Bellwood), June 7, by Marlin Kym.

Ellis-Gerber: Tim Ellis, Kitchener, Ont. (Missionary), and Irene Gerber, Millbank, Ont. (Riverdale), Aug. 17, by Glenn Zehr and Howard Ellis.

Jantzi-Wagler: Ethel Jantzi, Milverton, Ont. (Riverdale), and Stan Wagler, Wellesley, Ont. (Riverdale), June 8, by Glenn Zehr.

Kuepfer-Kuepfer: Edith Kuepfer, Ethel, Ont. (Riverdale), and Glen Kuepfer, Newton, Ont. (Riverdale), July 20, by Glenn Zehr.

Lehman-Rhodes: Bradley Lehman, Harrisonburg, Va. (Community), and Gloria Rhodes, Harrisonburg, Va. (Community), Aug. 10, by Jane Peifer and Phil Kniss.

DEATHS

Lehman, Rosa Viola, 83, Chesapeake, Va. Born: Dec. 27, 1912, McMinnville, Ore., to Emmanuel and Katie Beiler Troyer. Died: Aug. 22, 1996, Chesapeake, Va. Survivors—husband: Jacob R. Lehman; children: Kathryn Broadwater, Viola Dickerson, Elsie Miller, Paul, Harold, Jacob R. Jr., Mark, Robert; brothers and sisters: Ora, Levi, Paul, Emmanuel Jr., David, Edna Kramer, Martha Yoder; 22 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Aug. 26, Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, by Amos Esh, Harold Bergey, and Robert Mast.

Lengacher, George, 78, Grabill, Ind. Born: Feb. 3, 1918, Grabill, Ind., to Joseph and Anna Lengacher. Died: June 6, 1996, Grabill, Ind. Survivors—wife: Viola Gingerich Lengacher; children: Amanda Knepp Mullett, Elmer, Richard, Mark; 10 grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 9, Central Mennonite Church, by Don Delagrange, Wayne Goldsmith, and Scott Wagoner. Burial: Yaggy Cemetery.

La, Sau Thi, 85, Kitchener, Ont. Born: Cantho, South Vietnam, to Pho La and Giau Thi Nguyen. Died: April 22, 1996, Kitchener, Ont. Survivors—son: Khanh Nguyen; 5 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Bach Thai (husband). Funeral and burial: April 24, Riverdale Mennonite Church, by Glenn Zehr.

Miller, Gertrude Lucille Marner, 89, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Oct. 19, 1906, Johnson County, Iowa, to Isaac and Mary Miller Marner. Died: Aug. 22, 1996, Kalona, Iowa, of a stroke. Survivors—son: Elwin Joe; sister: Leta Maust, half sisters: Elmarie Capper, Lola Marner, Anna Mae Marner; 4 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Joseph L. Miller (husband). Congregational membership: Washington Mennonite Church. Funeral: Aug. 25, Peterseim Funeral Home, by Wayne Bohn. Burial: Lower Deer Creek Cemetery.

Price, Christopher Michael Graham, infant, South Bend, Ind. Born: Aug. 18, 1996, South Bend, Ind., to Thomas M. and Ann L. Graham Price. Died: Aug. 18, 1996. Survivors—parents; sister: Katherine Elizabeth Graham; grandparents: DeVon and Margaret Graham, Janet Price. Funeral: Aug. 22, Kern Road Mennonite Church, by David and Janice Yordy Sutter. Burial: Riverview Cemetery.

Schwartzentruber, Magdalena "Mattie" Wagler, 90, New Hamburg, Ont. Born: Sept. 5, 1905, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Isaac and Catherine Litwiller Wagler. Died: Aug. 10, 1996, New Hamburg, Ont. Survivors—husband: Elmer Schwartzentruber; children: Fern Erb, Mary Otterbein, Ruth Umble, Carol Joy Purves; sisters: Sarah Zehr, Vera Schulz; 11 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Aug. 14, Steinman Mennonite Church, by Scott Brubaker-Zehr, Herb Schultz, and Orland Gingerich.

Religious groups react against law overhauling welfare system

Mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish groups are responding with disappointment to President Clinton's signing of the Republican-sponsored legislation to change the welfare bill. The bill ends the 60-year federal guarantee of cash assistance to the nation's poorest children and gives states power to shape their own programs of aid to the poor.

David Beckmann, president of the Christian anti-hunger lobby Bread for the World, said that "virtually all the charities of the religious organizations in the country" are opposed to the law. "All of us who work with the poor know it's going to hurt them," he said.

—*Christian Century*

"Declaration of Life" signed by more than 20,000 people

The Cherish Life Circle, a Brooklyn-based Catholic anti-death penalty group, says that at least 20,000 people have signed a "Declaration of Life" statement that declares that if the person signing it becomes a homicide victim, he or she does not want the murderer executed "no matter how heinous their crime or how much I may have suffered."

The declaration, to be signed and stored with personal papers, includes requests that the document be admitted in the trial of any person charged with the signatory's murder and that the court not pursue the death penalty. If the accused is given the death sentence, the document requests that the governor or other executive officer block the execution.—*Sojourners*

Canadian Mennonite Brethren pass statement against dancing

Delegates at the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference in Winnipeg, July 11-14, approved an anti-dancing resolution. The statement, brought by the Board of Faith and Life in response to a dance that was held at a Mennonite Brethren national youth rally last winter, says that conferences and local church leaders should avoid activities at church-sponsored events such as "dancing, the use of alcoholic beverages, or the showing of videos or films which violate biblical standards."

The Mennonite Brethren also affirmed a mission statement and a document containing five core values.

—*Mennonite Brethren Herald*

Christian Coalition sued for ties to Republican campaigns

The Federal Election Commission filed suit against the Christian Coalition on July 30, claiming that the political organization breaks the law by giving improper aid to Republican candidates for office. The commission alleges that the coalition spent money on voter guides and other efforts in conjunction with campaigns of candidates such as George Bush, Oliver North, and Newt Gingrich.

The Christian Coalition is considered a "social welfare" organization that does not have to pay taxes, but contributions to it are not tax-deductible. To hold that status, such an organization is not allowed to promote individual political candidates.

Officials of the coalition claim that the government is trying to hinder their right to free speech.—*Christian Century*

U.S. Treasury releases computers seized from Pastors for Peace

The U.S. Treasury Department released 395 Cuban-bound computers that were seized from Pastors for Peace, an activist group that attempted to take the computers across the U.S.-Mexico border to be donated to Cuban hospitals, in violation of the U.S. economic embargo. The last of the computers were returned to the United Methodist Church, part of a mainline coalition trying to resolve the dispute between the clergy and lay activists and the government. Negotiations continue between the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and the government to send the computers to Cuba.

The pastors protested the seizure of the computers with a hunger strike through May 24.—*Christian Century and Sojourners*

Amish win Wisconsin court case on buggie fluorescent triangles

The Wisconsin Supreme Court has ruled that a state law requiring Amish horse-drawn buggies to display a red and orange triangle for safety reasons violated the group's religious rights. Wisconsin has required the Amish to place fluorescent triangles on the back of their buggies to make them more visible to motorists at night.

Eight Amish men challenged the state requirement, objecting to the triangle because of its bright colors and because it was what they called a "worldly symbol." They offered to hang a red lantern on each buggy and outline the buggies with white reflective tape. The court ruling noted that a traffic safety expert testified that the white tape is more effective than the state-mandated triangles.—*Christian Century*

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In praise of the church's critics:

What keeps the vision sharp

"How do you deal with criticism?" It's one of the most frequent questions I get when I travel around the church. This summer at Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference someone asked, "How do you handle all those negative letters?" At Iowa-Nebraska it was: "Don't you ever get discouraged?"

I do. In fact, I suspect I could horrify even myself if I counted the number of times in the past six years I've climbed on my bicycle and pedaled up and down the hills of western Pennsylvania, saying, "God, it's not fair. They don't understand."

The answer comes back, always the same: "It may not be fair, but what can you learn?"

What have I learned from criticism?

1. That I make mistakes. Many mistakes. All the time. Every issue. Like reporting eight-month budget figures as annual receipts in my story about PNMC. Or saying the moderator of Iowa-Nebraska was Phil Shenk when he's really Phil Shank.

2. That I need constantly to review my policies and procedures. "I agree with your decision not to print articles or letters on homosexuality," I heard at one conference. At another: "How will the church find its way on this issue if you print nothing about it?"

3. That most criticism is meant to help. In spite of what seems a common perception, I don't think *Gospel Herald* receives a lot of criticism. And if I honestly analyze what I do get, most of it is meant to help, not destroy.

4. That people care deeply about the church. Criticism comes from caring, not apathy. Far worse than facing criticism is to work with something about which no one cares.

• • •

That caring made possible what I suspect history will record as a most significant year in the church's history. In 1995, we adopted a new confession of faith and a new vision statement, even as we agreed to integrate the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church—all in one year, all with relative ease, none of which appears to have fragmented us.

One reason it went so well is because so many got involved in shaping the statements and documents that led to these decisions. We talked about them in congregational discussion groups. We aired our views at special area conferences. We wrote letters and gave feedback in personal conversations.

It was a time of genuine listening. The committees directing all three gave serious attention to every bit of feedback they received. The new confession, the new vision, and the proposal to integrate all became sharper and clearer because people in the church took the time to react, to criticize, and to say how they felt the Spirit was leading them.

• • •

May that involvement and listening continue into our future. Now that we have a decision to integrate—with a new confession and a new vision to guide us—I detect a mood to "get on with it." In that kind of atmosphere, questions about *how* and *why* tend to become unpopular when they slow down the process.

But this is precisely when we need these questions. Those of us involved in shaping the future must remember that what develops will be better if we take the time to answer the questions and face the doubts. True, there comes a time to move, to act—but we need to make sure our need to bring things to conclusion does not get us there prematurely.

At the same time, those of us who critique must make sure we do so for the cause of the church, not for our own self-interest—or even out of habit. There's no one less effective than a constant questioner or one who says "yes, but" because of a pet peeve or in order to be noticed. The surest way to be an effective critic is to have the reputation of being a supporter who asks questions at important times on important issues in the life of the church.

Critics must continue to have a role among us as we shape a new denomination. We must not silence their voices in the push to be one. Listening to what they say can help us keep our purpose clear and our vision sharp.

That's what I also try to remember when the "negative" letters come—even the subscription cancellations. I can be a better person, a better editor, because of them. If I quit being so defensive. And try to determine what it is I can learn from the church's critics.—*jlp*

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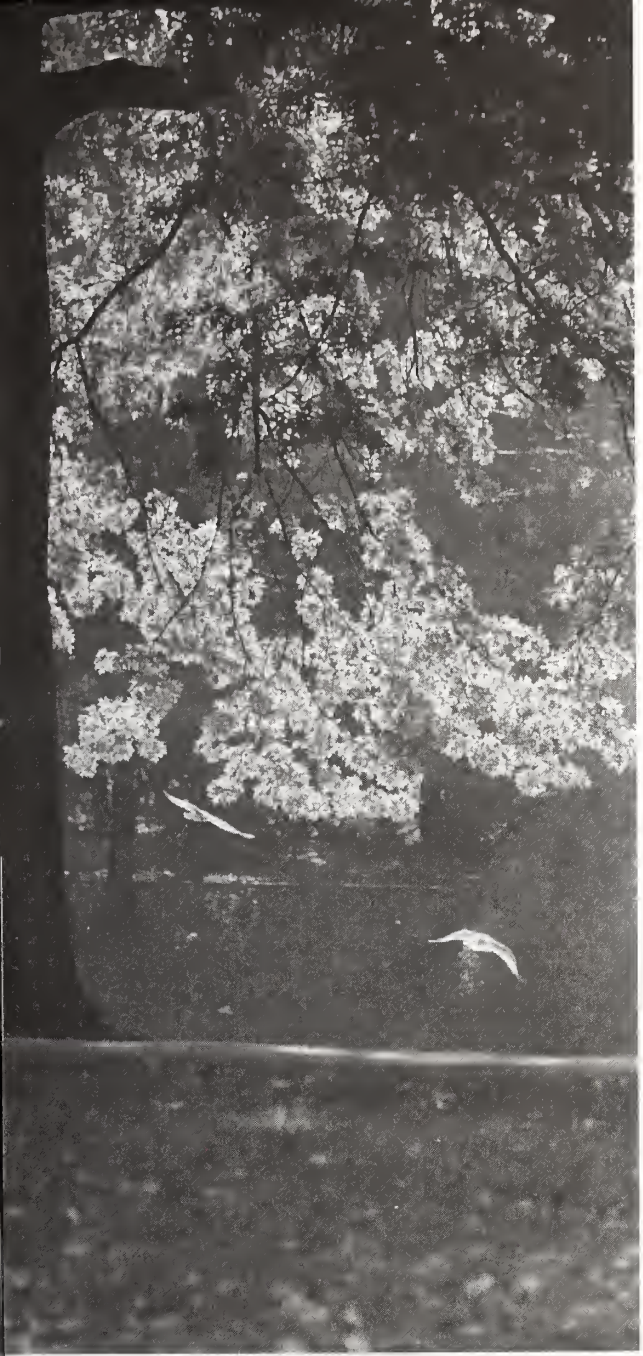
Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



Most of us find other things to crowd out quiet, reflective time, periods when we speak to and listen for God. Instead, we pray on the run, with quickie conversations with God strewn throughout the day.

Prayer is often a matter of just showing up

Transformative prayer begins where verbal expression ends. God works through us when we pause long enough to be met by the One already coming toward us.

by Keith Graber Miller

In the face of our own inadequacies, it is sometimes humbling to hear others' convictions about and experiences with prayer. In the United States, according to the most recent Gallup polls, nearly nine adults in 10 say they pray to God at least occasionally. Eighty percent of those who pray say the experience leads to the strong feeling that they are in the presence of God. About 97 percent of those who pray believe their prayers are heard, and about the same number believe their prayers have been answered.

In another study, the Princeton Religious Research Center used a 12-item scale to identify what they called "modern-day saints," or "hidden saints"—those who live quietly and selflessly among others. According to the study, these people have a transforming faith which changes both them and those around them; they are more charitable toward others; they are more concerned about the betterment of society; and they are far happier. Thirteen percent of the U.S. population are identified as such saints using the Princeton scale, and they are having an impact on society far out of proportion to their number, the researchers say. A

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

My vision for the Mennonite church (6):
Congregations that continue the good work already begun 6

Mennonite colleges and seminaries report mixed enrollment numbers . . 9

Call for Renewal convenes forum on interplay of faith and politics . . . 10

One of the things that derails prayer faster than anything else is starting with some noble idea of what it ought to be. Prayer is an ordinary, everyday kind of thing.

key characteristic of these people is their *absolute attention* to prayer—making a supreme effort to stay in close connection with God.

I am not among these hidden, praying saints. I'm not an overly proficient pray-er. As Mennonite pastor Duane Beck said in these pages, "For some people prayer is almost as natural as breathing. For me prayer is just plain hard work" (*Gospel Herald*, June 26, 1986). I know the feeling.

In her spiritual autobiography for a course I taught last spring, one student, explaining that she only recently had begun to pray again, wrote: "I remember that I stopped praying at the end of my sophomore year in high school. I discovered that I only prayed when I needed something from God, and guilt about that made me decide that it was better not to pray at all." She's in good company—the Gallup poll says nearly a third of the people who pray say they have stopped praying at one time or another.

Though I've never stopped praying completely, I've been influenced, no doubt, by the age-old skepticism about the purpose of prayer. In our day, this skepticism is intensified by some of the sciences and the doubts about God's interventions into the world. "Does God break into our lives when we pray, healing and helping others as we ask? What do we do when our prayers aren't answered? What good does prayer really do?" my students sometimes ask—and at points in my life, I've wondered the same.

I believe I'm at times a lousy pray-er because I suffer with what one observer calls "the tyranny of the urgent." Most of us find other things to crowd out quiet, reflective time, periods when we can speak to and listen for God. Instead, we pray on the run, with quickie conversations with God strewn throughout the day. Such prayer does allow us to keep the lines open with God, but it doesn't allow for the transformation which can come from listening to God in periods of holy silence. Sixteenth-century reformer Martin Luther declared, "I have so much business that I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer."

I've also been shaped by the perhaps mistaken notion that it is better to *do* than to *pray*. After all, I teach Christian ethics, which has to do with living out our faith. Occasionally I think that rather than disengaging from the world to a quiet space to contemplate, we should engage through serving our neighbors or the poor and oppressed, and consider that our communication with God, the God we see in others. Wasn't the God of the Old Testament displeased with traditional piety without actions to right injustices? As Micah says, God doesn't want to hear inauthentic, hyper-spiritual prayers; instead, we're charged to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God."

In a similar vein, Christian ethicist Allen Verhey tells the story about a college class he was teaching. One day he told his students it was time "to get their hands dirty" with a case study (*From Christ to the World,* Eerdmans, 1994). The case had to do with whether to cooperate with a friend seeking an abortion. The

friend was eight weeks pregnant, a victim of date rape. Verhey gave the case and asked, "What would you do?" He was hoping to elicit comments about autonomy or the status of the fetus or the differences between doing an act or cooperating with an act, ideas which would set up major ethical issues he wanted to turn to next.

But the class wasn't so eager to dirty its hands. Verhey called on a young woman in the front row and asked, "What would *you* do?" Rather timidly, she said, "Well, I guess I'd pray." Several students around her laughed. Verhey himself was mildly amused and said, "That's nice, but then what would you do?" The student's classmates rescued her from the silence by telling what they would do and why, quickly steering the session into the concrete issues Verhey hoped they could discuss. Prayer was never mentioned again.

It was only later that the teacher recognized the inappropriateness of his response—his failure to take the student seriously. He could have at least asked her what she thought prayer was and how it might have helped her discern what she should do.

Had he inquired about how prayer might have affected her decision making, the student *might* have said, as he notes, "Prayer is to call upon God. It is to invoke God and to adore God as the one on whom we depend, as helper and healer, as creator and provider and redeemer." If the teacher had pushed her further, wondering how on earth that would help her decide what to do, she might have said, as Verhey observes, "I don't know exactly: it probably *wouldn't* help me know precisely what to do. But I think it would help me focus more on God, remembering that God is before and behind all of our decisions, and it might reorient me to see all other things in relation to God. It might keep me from making life *or* my friend an *idol*, and it might keep me as well from turning against life or my friend as though they were evil, since all that God made is good."

The student might have said, in response to the teacher's follow-up inquiry about the nature of prayer, "Prayer is confession: it is to acknowledge the presence and power of evil in my own life and in my own heart. Prayer looks to God in repentance and remorse." Again, such a perspective wouldn't tell her exactly what she should do when her friend came to her wanting her to assist with getting an abortion. But seeing prayer as confession might have kept her from judging her friend too quickly or severely, or it might have reminded her of the evil we sometimes do in resisting evil. Seeing prayer as repentance could have reminded her, as Verhey says, that she was "neither the judge nor the savior," and therefore allow her to be "critical without condescension, and helpful without conceit."

The student might have said, "Prayer is intercession: it petitions God to establish God's own good future and to grant to us—and to our friends and to our enemies—already now some taste of that future." While such a view again would not have told her exactly what to do in her dilemma, it might have helped her to see her friend in a different light. It might have helped her to consider a longer view—that moments of decision-making fall within much larger contexts and relationships, and they have an impact on others for many years. It might have allowed her to see her friend and the organism inside of her in a different way, trying to see their futures in God's good world.

All of this suggests that prayer—as a reminder of God's presence, grace, and power—can provide for us moments of self-transcendence and opportunities to transform our sensibilities and notions about how to live or how to care or what to do. Whether prayer is private, alone in our closets, cars, or classrooms, or whether it is public, in corporate worship, prayer takes us down a pathway toward God and toward perspectives larger than our own.

So much of our lives, especially during our high school and college years, are focused, as they need to be, on the self: self-discovery, faith development, career selection, maturation, and being sufficiently cool or coifed to attract friends and mates. We receive a great deal of attention from others through grades, advising, affirmation, encouragement, constructive critiques, and care. But through individual and corporate prayer, we remember others around the world who face hunger and need; we pray for others who experience pain or loss or joy; we acknowledge warfare and violent struggle most of us have never known; and we express gratitude for God's grace. In all of these moments, we can see beyond ourselves, and such is necessary for wholistic living. In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster writes that "in prayer, real prayer, we begin to think God's thoughts after God: to desire the things

Prayer, whether private or corporate, takes us down a pathway toward perspectives that are larger than our own.

God desires, to love the things God loves. Progressively we are taught to see things from God's point of view."

Finding time and space in our lives to pray is not easy, but it is essential if we hope to live life fully in the presence of God. It is through prayer, both speaking to God and listening to God in silence, that we establish a deeper relationship with the One who creates us, sustains us, and redeems us. Prayer helps establish a transformative, intimate, trusting relationship between God and those who call on God's name. To pray is to open ourselves to change.

Prayer, then, is a risky thing: it leaves us open to becoming different people, shaped by a God who moves in us when we listen. Even when we are uncertain how to pray, or what to say, we can learn from others as we hear them pray, and we can simply listen in silence for God to speak a word. Church historian Roberta Bondi recently said, "One of the things that derails prayer faster than anything is starting with some sort of noble idea of what it ought to be. I stress that prayer is a pretty ordinary, everyday kind of thing. Yes, it has its high moments, but a lot of prayer is just a matter of showing up." (*Christian Century*, March 20-27, 1996)

Sometimes genuine transformative prayer begins where our verbal expression ends. Just as intimate relationships sometimes are furthered by moments of silence together, God can work in us when we pause long enough to be met on the pathway by the One who already is coming toward us. Even those of us who are prayerfully inadequate and incompetent can at least show up—and be transformed in our encounter with God.

Keith Graber Miller teaches in the Bible and religion department at Goshen (Ind.) College and is a member of College Mennonite Church. He also serves as a Gospel Herald *editorial consultant. This article is adapted from a talk he gave last January at Bethany Christian High School during Spiritual Life Emphasis Week.*

"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, . . . humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross."
—Philippians 2:5-6, 8, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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God is concerned with the safety and protection of women. The apostle Paul writes about this in 1 Cor. 11:10. Should the woman have power on her head? Paul's answer is affirmative, and he uses the word "ought": obligation, duty, advisability, prudence, or desirability, according to the dictionary.

Apparently this power is meant to be visible and symbolized by a veil. The reason for this symbol is because of the angels. Is this power of angels a lost treasure today?

May the tender voice of the Holy Spirit, or God's still small voice, speak in our hearing. Angels and their ministry are a part of the New Testament revelation to believers. God's promise of angelic power is in conformity with the tenor of the gospel.

Wilmer Swope
Leetonia, Ohio

A rather odd word has surfaced recently in the Mennonite lexicon: "distinctives" (see ***Which Way for Mennonite Theology?*** (Jan. 23) and ***The Place to Begin Mennonite Theology*** (July 30).

Some writers want to stress ideas and practices that are usually associated with Mennonites. Others do not, believing they impede evangelism and church growth. What are these Mennonite distinctives, and should they be de-emphasized?

If one is shoofly pie, I can eat apple. If another is Pennsylvania Dutch, I can speak English.

But if nonviolent, good-for-evil, life-affirming behavior that is rooted in the teachings of the Prince of Peace is called a "distinctive," then I have no suitable substitute. I'm stuck with distinctive. But surely a better word, in this instance, would be "imperative."

John A. Hertzler
Mathews, Va.

You asked for a response to the series, "My Vision for the Mennonite church." So I have 2,000 words, gleaned from 71 years of observation and some suffering. Then I also observe that while "leaders" were chosen to write in this series, the rest of us are to keep our vision to 200 words or less! About the size of my wife's cookie recipe.

Somewhat deflated, I write the following as my vision:

My vision for the Mennonite church is a powerful, praying church. This is a church that has its "head lifted up," looking to the fields and sending its sons and daughters to tell the good news. This church grapples with the idol of materialism that chokes the life blood out of an otherwise promising brotherhood.

I also see a suffering church (for righteousness' sake). Two Sundays ago, at our church, we stood in circles of four, praying for some 20 missions around the world. We also have over 100 prayer cells in the congregation. A praying church. I see it coming.

Norman Teague
Linville, Va.

Thank you so much for the tributes to Alicia Showalter Reynolds (Aug. 27). I do not know the people involved, but I do understand what they are going through.

In 1993, my brother, Jonathan Kanagy, died of cancer at age 51. My brother had given his life in Christian service—as a missionary, a pastor, and a chaplain. Up until his death, he had a deep commitment and love for God, the Bible, and conservative theology.

So what do we do with those circumstances that completely defy our understanding, like the "untimely" death of my brother? Why would God allow my brother to die, one who was so useful to the kingdom of God, so needed by his wife and family?

When God doesn't make sense, we must, "Trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). There's nothing wrong with using our minds to try to understand life's situations, but we can't lean on these limited understandings.

We need daily to affirm our belief in an omnipotent God, a sovereign God, and a good God. We need to believe with all our heart that everything that happens to us as God's children is either designed by God or allowed by God for our good. Everything!

Was the death of my brother God's will? My finite mind shouts, "No!" But in my heart I kneel in quiet submission to and trust in God, who had the power to act but who sovereignly choose to allow this death.

Sound too simplistic? Not for me.

Fred Kanagy
Bloomfield, Mont.

In his letter ("Readers Say," Sept. 10), Brad Glick writes that Valerie Weaver "missed the spirit of Disney" in her editorial, ***This Business of Pretending*** (Aug. 20). That, I'm afraid, is like Pinocchio calling someone long in the nose. The spirit of Disney is imaginative, yes, but contrary to what Glick pretends it to be, it is seldom redemptive and frequently malicious.

When Pocahontas is imagined to be a New Age-spouting maiden with a Miss America figure; when Arabs are portrayed via "Aladdin" as dirty scoundrels whose doe-eyed princess is "rescued" by a sensitive, Western-style hunk; and when turn-of-the-century America is nostalgically re-created as a lily-white, peppermint-stick-eating paradise called "Main Street, USA," imagination needs to be condemned for what it is: money-grubbing, counterfactual, and culturally demeaning.

While Glick's defense of imagination is well-intended, it needs to be more discriminating. Conflating "a stroll across the Sea of Galilee" (or a trip to Narnia, for that matter) with a dance through Disneyland represents wishful thinking at its worst.

Philip Goff
Pasadena, Calif.

Pontius' Puddle

My vision for the Mennonite church (6):

Congregations that continue

The Mennonite church of the future must continue to grow in following Jesus. We will fail and we will succeed, and God's grace will continue to bear us up. Continuing a series of eight by 25 Mennonite leaders on where we're headed and how we might get there.

by Wayne Speigle

Is it fair to suggest that the future of the Mennonite church ought to be more of the same?

I believe a great deal is right with the church. My dream is that we will continue to make disciples, while we ourselves are being made into disciples. This means perceiving ourselves as recovering sinners. By Christ we have been delivered from the realm of sin into the kingdom of God; however, sin is still influential in our lives as individuals and as groups. Rather than deny the darkness that still lives within us, we own up to the shadows and allow God's light to reveal and illuminate. Our journey consists of leaving sinful attitudes and experiencing God's grace by following Jesus into greater spiritual maturity.

To focus on the goal of Christian maturity, more congregations will write covenants—not as much for the words on paper as for the process of coming to agreement on faith essentials. These covenants will help us define the basic character of a Christian. This process relies on communication and some compromise (more on words than actual principles), forging toward the promise of agreement. Since none of us live in a completely Christlike manner, tension always exists between defining who we are and who we are becoming.

We will continue to be Christocentric, recognizing the defining moment of our lives as our experience of grace in Christ and giving our lives to him. While it is basic, this relationship varies with individual experiences. We must speak often about grace in Christ to become familiar with one another's descriptions. Because grace is better described as being saved (a lifelong process), the experiences of others will often assist our own sense of grace.

Even though we live as Christ's body imperfectly, our changed lives will witness to the possibility for others. Our struggling in God's power toward spiritual successes will counter the fatalism of the thought, "I cannot (or need not) change." This will be true both for those within the church and for those drawn to it.

We will continue to welcome all people into our congregations, regardless of their backgrounds or life experiences. We will not encourage them to go elsewhere when they do not accept our view of Christian faith or when they feel alienated for their beliefs or practice. Their presence is a growth edge for them and for us.

At the same time, we will retain a sense of membership, for those who commit themselves to a certain way of life which we discern together, that is consistent with the life and teachings of Jesus. For example, sincere Christians (or anyone) in military service can be part of the Mennonite church community as seekers or believers in Jesus. When they choose to leave the military, they are ready to become members —meaning in this case that they have accepted the call of Jesus to live without violence or the threat of it. Church members will continue to struggle with violent tendencies personally and corporately, all the while agreeing on the goal.

Persons with broader views of acceptable sexual expression can also find a home in our church, understanding that covenanted membership includes commitment to heterosexual marriage or celibacy. This principled inclusion retains the integrity of a disciplined faith while accepting that we humans will always be on a journey.

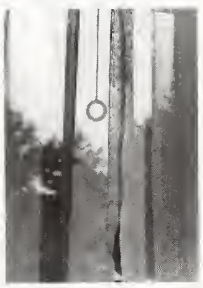
Leaders who fall from grace will be shown grace, not by sweeping the offense under the rug nor by dealing with it only as gossip, but by facing the fall honestly as an example of sinful humanity. We are all capable of these setbacks, setbacks which can become occasions for grace and healing.

We aim to walk together with Christ, each

the good work already begun

one experiencing God's forgiving and rejuvenating grace. The Mennonite church of the future will continue to grow in following Jesus. We will take risks with ambitious goals for the church and for ourselves. We will fail and we will succeed, and God's grace will continue to bear us up.

Wayne Speigle is pastor of First Mennonite Church, Richmond, Va. He is the father of two daughters and husband of a physician.



by Norma Peters Duerksen

We need to have a clear vision of where we have come from in order to have a vision for the future. Mennonite history shows that we had childlike faith and yet were biblically wise. Our core beliefs included: believers baptism, authority of the Scriptures, primacy of the New Testament, the discipleship of following Jesus, group discipline with compassion, living simply, separation of church and state, rejecting violence and war, and accepting the way of suffering.

We came to these beliefs following much prayer and study of the Scriptures. The future of the Mennonite church will depend on the same.

My vision for the church is to enhance adult education opportunities. We must nurture the eagerness to study the Bible so we once again know what we believe.

I envision a church made up of adults who teach our children Bible stories in colorful and creative ways and encourage the youth to ask questions of faith and to commit themselves to discipleship. But it is also a church that wants to learn more about God, Jesus Christ, and what it means to be a Mennonite Christian as an adult today.

We cannot stop with studying the Bible but must become diligent in applying it to our lives. This will require much prayer and discernment as we struggle with issues in our society.

This will require quality scholarship in our seminaries. It will demand scholars' utmost care and prayer to be true to the Word of God and yet able to communicate their study to the people in congregations. It will require our publishing houses to continue to get this work into print and into our hands. We will need creative writers to help us make these studies come alive as an encouragement to apply God's Word to our lives.

We will need teachers trained to lead their peers in prayer, study, and discussion. Will there be gifted people at the conference level to minister to the churches in this way? Will our colleges equip people, not only for jobs, but also for church participation?

My vision calls for a church that will not allow education to be frittered away by coffee hours, planning for the next potluck, or even the caregiving that is so necessary in this isolated, individualized society. It may call us to lengthen the time we give God on Sunday mornings and to gather throughout the week to wrestle with our faith.

It is only when we know who we are and what we believe that we can be a benefit to our communities and our world. The ecumenical Christian world begs us to hold fast to our understanding of Jesus Christ and his gospel. All will benefit from our uniqueness and our call to Christian discipleship if we become "people of the book."

Norma Peters Duerksen is associate pastor at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio. She is married to Phil, who is a farmer.

by J. Lawrence Burkholder

Genes in plants and animals are sometimes mysteriously altered, for reasons that biologists do not fully understand. Such changes in the genetic structure are called mutations.

Even unobtrusive mutations are significant because the changes they bring are passed on to future generations. So they are of more than incidental value; they are historical. Furthermore, mutations are the most genuine of changes; although they may be induced by the environment, they arise primarily from the character of the organism itself.

This analogy from nature may be a clue to how the Mennonite church may approach the next 10 years. I am not among those who would call for a metamorphosis; though God may choose to transform the church as if from a caterpillar to a butterfly, planning in these terms seems presumptuous. Rather, I pray that God may enhance something already resident

"I long for the day when our love of people may be so obvious that 'plain and fancy' images may be replaced by modern equivalents of the good Samaritan."

in our tradition. In other words, changes in the Mennonite church should be genuine, humble, without fanfare, without hype—possibly largely unnoticed even by church "biologists" of our time—but nevertheless significant.

I hope that Mennonites may be among the kindest, most caring, most gracious people of the world. What would be more germane to our historic pacifist profession than to be exceedingly loving to one another? We must seek to model our congregations after the admonition of the apostle Paul; "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

Obviously, a call to genuine community is not new. Koinonia is in our genetic pool. But without reducing the significance of traditional life together, Mennonites need to experience a mutation in the direction of the environment. As a plant in blossom unfolds graciously to the wind, the sunshine, and the rain, so the Mennonite church should turn its branches outward, giving its life for the benefit of the world.

But does this analogy suggest the ominous certainty of death and decay since many plants and some animals reproduce and then die? Can the church survive involvement in the world? This is an old issue with Mennonites. For some 400 years, the Mennonite church has chosen to concentrate its energies primarily upon its own life and welfare. For the sake of purity and social cohesion, we have been an inward-looking people preoccupied with our boundaries, uniqueness, genealogies, language, migrations, theology, history, culture, and institutions.

We may be grateful that our heritage sustains us insofar as our denominational consciousness has enabled us to withstand some of the disintegrating forces of modernity. But in a sense, the Mennonite church, like all else, must die. It cannot go on forever as it is. Both nature and history are rooted in change. Christians are mortal, not only because they are human but also because they follow Jesus.

I propose that the Mennonite church should run the risk of death by involving itself in the life and processes of the world. The alternative is to survive but to remain alone. Jesus said just that. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains alone; but if it dies it brings forth much fruit."

I am not suggesting that service outside the community of faith should be done heedlessly and without the sustaining nourishment of communal rituals such as worship, preaching, Sunday school, youth activities, and institutional maintenance. But I am suggesting that the paradox that only those who lose their lives will gain them is true for a denomination as well as for individual followers of Christ.

The Mennonite church, as many of us have known it, is dying anyway. At least there are no longer many externals that distinguish the Mennonites from Christians of other denominations. By and large, our upper-middle-class morality in professional and business life is no longer unique, if it ever was. It is, therefore, not a matter of death itself but rather how the Mennonite church dies and for what reason. Shall we die by identifying with this world's opulence or with this world's sufferings?

The best in the Mennonite tradition can be maintained by forgetful, unpretentious, sacrificial giving, especially to those who have nothing to give back in exchange. That means the really poor, the social outcasts, the neglected outside our Mennonite communities. Recall Jesus' reminder, "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?"

But what could a mutation toward the outside mean practically? When it comes to the question of who to love, Jesus allows no limits and few directions. But just as there are over 20,000 species of orchids, there are thousands upon thousands of ways to share our being with others and to learn from them in the process.

I hope that during the next 10 years the side of Mennonite experience for which we have gained an admirable image in international settings may increasingly characterize the home base as well. Here in America we are viewed primarily as a people of folk peculiarities; in foreign countries we are seen more as a people of unprecedented generosity, cultural flexibility, and outgoing energies. Possibly we should study the Salvation Army as a church for whom ministry to the down-and-out is so dominant that it is more likely to be viewed as a Christian, evangelical service organization than as a denomination.

To be sure, Mennonites should not imitate the Salvation Army or any other group. But I long for the day when our love of people beyond our fellowship may be so obvious that "plain and fancy" images may be replaced by modern equivalents of the good Samaritan.

J. Lawrence Burkholder is president emeritus of Goshen (Ind.) College. He is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Enrollment numbers are mixed at Mennonite Church colleges and seminaries

Scottdale, Pa. (AMBS-EMU-GC-HC)—The story of school enrollment is an ever-changing one, and this year is no exception. Some of the Mennonite Church colleges and seminaries face a slight downturn in enrollment this fall; others face unprecedented increases.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Enrollment at AMBS, Elkhart, Ind., continues a rising trend this fall. The total number of students enrolled is 194, as compared to 169, 155, and 143 in the previous three years.

"We're grateful to God for the increase," says Willard Swartley, dean and acting president. "We are especially grateful for the international students, the strong number of Canadian students, and the increased enrollment of United Methodist students."

Goshen College. Enrollment has dropped slightly from last year at Goshen (Ind.) College. Preliminary figures show 1,004 students enrolled at the campus, as opposed to 1,066 at this time in 1995, according to director of enrollment Rich Gerig. Of these, 840 are full-time students in the traditional program, 39 are full-time in degree-completion programs, and 125 are part-time.

"We are optimistic that enrollments will be increasing in the next several years," says interim president Henry Weaver. "Some significant changes are being made in our recruitment procedures . . . made possible because of grant funds secured from the Lilly Endowment by outgoing president Victor Stoltzfus."

Becky Schmidt (left), Hesston (Kan.) College first-year student from Moundridge, Kan., and her mother Dawna visit with associate director of admissions Dallas Stutzman during registration.

Eastern Mennonite University. Total enrollment at EMU, Harrisonburg, Va., has topped the 1,300 mark for the first time in the school's 79-year history.

A total of 1,317 students are enrolled in EMU's undergraduate, seminary, and graduate programs for the fall semester, compared to 1,205 the same time last year. Official figures show a full-time undergraduate enrollment of 894 students, one higher than last fall. Seminary enrollment stands at 113, down slightly from 124 last fall. EMU has 151 students enrolled in its graduate degree programs, up from 48 last fall.

Hesston College. Enrollment at Hesston (Kan.) College is down somewhat from last year. The total number of students enrolled is 438, down from 472 in 1995. The full-time equivalent, as measured by the Mennonite Board of Education, is 410, a decrease from 439 in 1995.

Fifty-seven percent of the students at Hesston this year are Mennonite, the highest percentage since 1990.

Stewardship Council endorses The Giving Project

Kansas City, Mo.—The Giving Project, a five-year stewardship initiative of the Mennonite Church, was the focus of meetings of the Churchwide Stewardship Council on Sept. 12-13.

Director of The Giving Project, Mark Vincent of Elkhart, Ind., led the participants through a detailed review of its history and purpose.

The first component of the project, developing a theology of money, is in its second phase; nearly 60 readers are currently critiquing a statement that will become a book titled, *A Christian View of Money.* According to Vincent, the statement is meant to become an essential element in congregational discussions of stewardship.

Vincent reported that a brochure will soon be distributed to all Mennonite congregations in the United States and Canada which will outline seven congregational initiatives and invite congregations to commit themselves to involvement in the stewardship project.

Vincent explained that another part of congregational education will be naming consultants in each conference. They will spend two weeks of training with project staff and then will be available for work with congregations.

Council members enthusiastically affirmed The Giving Project. In other business, Elam Hertzler from Southeast Conference became moderator of the council and James Martin of Lancaster Conference was affirmed as moderator-elect. The council also heard reports from Orval and Dorothy Shank, who are doing stewardship education in various churches.

This is the first time that General Conference districts were invited to send voting representatives to the Stewardship Council, which until now has been a Mennonite Church network.

—William R. Zuercher

Seminary in India holds theological consultation

Pune, India—The faculty, governing body, and guests of Union Biblical Seminary (UBS), a theological training school supported by the Mennonite Church, held a recent consultation on "Pursuing Theological Education at UBS for the Indian Church in the 21st Century."

UBS, begun by 11 missions in India in 1953, is now the largest evangelical seminary in India.

The consultation focused on issues confronting theological educators in India and examined the educational methodology of the seminary. It was followed by meetings of the board of governors and the UBS Association, the controlling body of 30 churches and agencies.

The board and association appointed Leaderwell Pohsngap as the new principal beginning in May 1997. Pohsngap is currently the principal of a Church of God Bible College in Shillong, India.

The board heard reports of a community development project which provides training in income-generating skills to some 60 girls and women from nearby slums.

Neither right nor left:
Call to Renewal offers ideas for intersection of faith and politics

Washington, D.C.—With the Christian Coalition meeting less than a mile away, the Call to Renewal convened "A National Forum on Faith and Politics" conference, Sept. 13-14, in Washington, D.C.

The Call to Renewal, formed last year, has fulfilled its first goal, according to *Sojourners* editor Jim Wallis, one of its steering committee members: to provide an alternative forum for Christians uncomfortable with both the religious right and the secular left. It now aims to fulfill its main goal of finding civil and nonpartisan solutions to problems in the United States such as racism, violence, poverty, the breakup of the family, and environmental degradation.

Wallis said that the Call "will have the spirit of a movement and the organization of a network," using as its model Martin Luther King, Jr., in the Civil Rights movement, "basically raising the moral questions in politics." The Call will not get involved in "precinct organizing and party politics," Wallis said. "We don't want to be a power bloc in either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party."

Although the Call is attempting to reach a broad spectrum of Christians, historic peace church members present at the Call conference wondered whether they have a place. They noted that most of the conference agenda was on domestic issues; little was said about world peace, cutting the military budget, or that tensions were building between the United States and Iraq even as the meetings were in session.

In private conversation with some Mennonites and Brethren, Wallis assured them that international peace issues would be on the agenda in the future. He added that Mennonites have much to contribute in the area of conflict resolution.

Call to Renewal leadership agrees that big government programs are not the answer to social problems such as poverty. No one argued that "welfare as we know it" should not be eliminated. However, they found fault with programs being eliminated before anything else is designed to replace them.

Wallis, who lives 20 blocks from the White House, said that drugs, gang violence, teen pregnancy, and lack of jobs are destroying his inner-city neighborhood. He said personal morality and responsibility are needed, as well as social policies and private enterprise that will stimulate job growth.

New coalitions of the public and private sectors, along with churches and other charitable organizations, are needed to meet the needs of people who for the past 60 years depended on federally guaranteed welfare programs, speakers said. In an effort to practice what they preached, they invited homeless people to the final banquet session in a high school gymnasium.

The Christian Coalition, which has had a huge impact upon the Republican Party, came under sharp attack, especially from Tony Campolo, another member of the Call's steering committee. "When they say they're pro-life, many of us, if not most of us, would say, 'We're pro-life too,' " Campolo said.

"My problem [is] they're not pro-life enough. I contend that if you're going to be pro-life, you ought not only have a discussion about abortion, you also have to have a discussion about tobacco, an industry that kills 450,000 Americans and a million worldwide [annually].

"You're not pro-life if you're not talking about guns," Campolo remonstrated. "You're not pro-life if you're not talking about the Third World, you're not pro-life if you're in favor of capital punishment."

While the Call to Renewal seems miles removed from the Christian Coalition politically, Wallis has met several times with Coalition leader Ralph Reed to try to "reach common ground by moving to higher ground." The Call planners invited the Christian Coalition to a combined prayer service in the National Cathedral, but the Coalition's program already had been set. Wallis said he hopes a joint worship service will happen in the future.

The Washington meeting served as the kickoff for 40 town meetings in 30 cities across the country in the six weeks following the conference. The town meetings are intended to forge local alliances to work on political solutions to problems such as racism and poverty.

Several Mennonites are in Call leadership positions. Ron Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action, is a member of the steering committee. Duane Shank from *Sojourners* helped to coordinate the meeting.—*Richard A. Kauffman*

Mennonite Board of Missions workers move to isolated Russian republic

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—"For as long as I could remember, I had a desire to be a missionary," says Alice Shenk.

Now Shenk has that chance. She and her husband, Phil, their children, and companion Donna Classen, all members of Northridge Christian Fellowship in Springfield, Ohio, arrived on Sept. 5 in Dagestan, an isolated part of Russia.

Collapse of obstacles. The Shenks will live among the Tabasarans, one of 35 linguistic peoples in the region. The Tabasarans make up about 5 percent of Dagestan's population. The region they call home has been completely Muslim since the eighth century.

This autonomous southern republic of the Russian Federation neighbors warring Chechnya along the outlying Caucasus Mountains between the Black and Caspian Seas. Yet unlike Chechnya, Dagestan has maintained stable relations with the central Russian government (although rebel Chechyns held 200 hostages for several days early in 1996 in Dagestan's northern city of Kizlyar). As one of 17 autonomous republics in the Russian Federation, Dagestan has its own elected legislature with limited local authority and functions.

After three visits to Dagestan, Phil Shenk has seen the collapse of obstacles to working among the Tabasarans. "It may be the most opportune time there has been in a long time," says Phil, who will teach English each week to three classes of children in grades 5-10. He also will teach a class of adults in the village. Alice will provide home-schooling for their children, who also will attend the local Russian schools. The basic functions of life will occupy much of the family's existence.

"It will be hard work to prepare and store enough food for a household of eight," says Dale Schumm, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) director for Asia and the Middle East, who visited the region from July 19 to 30 with Phil. They sought to cement relationships with the Tabasarans and prepare for the family's move to the village of Bookhnog, where a house was built for the Shenks.

The Shenks will become the 28th household in the mountain village, which has about 200 people. "We need prayer for us to be a redemptive Christian influence in this region and for us to have the strength and stamina to walk through physical and spiritual obstacles," says Phil, who had served as pastor of Northridge Christian Fellowship since 1982. "We don't have any illusions about it being an easy situation spiritually."

Partnership emerges. In May 1992, Phil and six other people from the Ohio Mennonite congregation began to pray and seek a region of the world in need of God's love. They had read about the "10-40 Window," a section of the world between 10 and 40 degrees north in which there is little or no Christian presence. Phil and two other members visited the Tabasarans during a 10-day exploratory visit in June 1994. During the trip, Phil met a Tabasaran leader who invited him to come teach English.

Since then, a partnership has formed between MBM and Friends of the Tabasarans, a mission group organized by the Northridge congregation. Each group will share in the financial support.

The Shenks have six children. Their 15-year-old son, Nathan, is staying in Goshen, Ind., where he is a student at Bethany Christian High School. Their 18-year-old daughter, Deborah, will spend the first year in Dagestan helping her father teach English before she returns to the States for college.

Donna Classen, who for 19 years served as administrator of Northridge Christian Fellowship's daycare program, will help the family with day-to-day life.

—Tom Price

Art students and previously homeless children create cards as fundraiser for Bridge of Hope

Lancaster, Pa.—Seven previously homeless children spent an afternoon with Lancaster Mennonite High School (LMH) students creating works of art this spring. Art teacher Mary Lou Houser turned those pictures into all-occasion and Christmas cards that were printed recently.

Each child worked one-on-one with an LMH art student on creating pieces of art with bold colors that were transferred to the cards. The children were asked to create art focusing on two themes: things that make them happy about their new home and images related to Christmas. The children ranged in age from 5 to 13 years.

The sale of the cards benefits Bridge of Hope, a program that helps homeless women and their children move from shelters to permanent housing by providing rental assistance and services for 12-18 months. Bridge of Hope also connects each family with a mentoring group of trained volunteers from local Mennonite churches, who provide friendship and support as well as practical help like locating an apartment to rent.

"It was exciting to see the LMH students really focusing on the children, encouraging their creativity and applauding their efforts," says Edith Yoder, executive director of Bridge of Hope and alumna of LMH. "The students really helped the children in Bridge of Hope feel important and take pride in their work."

Leona (left), a child in the Bridge of Hope program, works with Lancaster Mennonite High School student Miki to create artwork that was then transferred to Christmas cards.

- **IVEP program starts.** Sixty-two people are participating in Mennonite Central Committee's International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP). The 1996-97 IVEP began with an orientation Aug. 3-7 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church. The one-year cultural exchange program brings participants from 25 countries to North America for vocational training in Mennonite agencies and businesses.

- **Intermenno trainees begin.** Twenty-four North Americans have begun a year in Europe with the Intermenno Trainee program. Participants spend a year working and living with European Mennonites. Administered by trainee committees in Europe, the program receives assistance from Mennonite Central Committee.

- **Alumni weekends.** Goshen (Ind.) College will hold its alumni weekend Oct. 4-6, and Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., will hold its homecoming and parents weekend on Oct. 11-13. Both weekends include reunions, sports events, concerts, art exhibits, and banquets.

- **New appointments:**

Michele Hershberger, project associate for The Giving Project, Elkhart, Ind.

C. Nelson Hostetter, coordinator for the dual conference congregations of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church.

Marcia Troupe, administrative assistant and office manager, Mennonite Church General Board office, Elkhart, Ind.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Tom Michaels was installed as pastor of Millersburg (Ohio) Mennonite Church on Aug. 25.

- **Coming events:**

Snitz fest, Hans Herr House, Willow Street, Pa., Oct. 5. More information from 717 464-4438.

Michiana MEDA meeting, Goshen, Ind., Oct. 10. Mindy Moore and Gene Yoder will speak. Reservations available from 219 537-4334.

Northeast Ohio MEDA meeting, Kidron Mennonite Church fellowship hall, Oct. 12. Keith Yoder will speak on socially responsible investing. Reservations available from 330 857-5831.

MDS Region I annual meeting, Sunny Crest Home, Morgantown, Pa., Oct. 19. More information from 717 859-2210.

Dinner meeting, Business and Professional Women, Mount Joy, Pa., Oct. 22. "Inside the Family Business" will be presented by Helen Hurst, Rhoda Oberholtzer, and Rosalie Roland. Information and reservations available from 717 295-2333.

Restorative justice conference, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College, Oct. 25-26. Speakers and panelists include David Augsburger, Lois Barrett, Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, and Howard Zehr. Focuses on defining the role of legislation and the church in restorative justice. More information from 800 909-VORP.

Michiana Anabaptist historians fall meeting, Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., Oct. 26. The theme is "A Tribute to Menno Simons." Open to nonmembers. More information from 219 533-7819.

- **Job openings:**

Administrative assistant, National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, Washington, D.C. Full-time responsibilities include office management; assisting in production of funding appeals, literature, and newsletters; and computer database maintenance. Qualifications include previous office experience; background in word processing and data base programs desired. Send letter of interest and résumé by Nov. 15 to Marian Franz, 2121 Decatur Place, NW, Washington, DC 20008-1923.

Controller, Friendship Community, Lititz, Pa. Responsibilities include overseeing accounting functions and managing financial activities. Qualifications include a degree in accounting, five years experience, and a working knowledge of computers. Contact Denise Herr at 717 656-2466.

Director of media relations, Philhaven Behavioral Healthcare, Mount Gretna, Pa. Half-time responsibilities includes coordination of media communications and writing and editing projects. Qualifications include bachelor's degree and two years experience in communications, journalism, or related field. Send letter and résumé to Human Resources, Philhaven Behavioral Healthcare, PO Box 550, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064.

Middle school principal, Penn View Christian School, Souderton, Pa. Qualifications include teaching and administrative experience and advanced degree. Full-time position opens summer of 1997. More information is available from 215 723-1196.

- **Change of address:**

First Mennonite Church, 4601 Knollton Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46228.

In Fran's wake. *Harrisonburg, Va.*—Myron Brubaker loads food that was collected during a retreat Sept. 13-15 at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va. Church members collected nonperishable food items to donate to the local Red Cross distribution center for flood relief. Red Cross officials estimate some $60 million in flood damage, including some 156 homes destroyed, in the central Shenandoah Valley from Hurricane Fran.

Some 26 youth and sponsors from Community Mennonite spent one afternoon helping a family who was especially hard-hit by flooding from the storm. "It was a pretty bizarre scene," said Brad Wakefield. "The MYF-ers were pretty shaken by all the destruction and moved by stories of the ordeal told by the family."

Andy Peifer, a junior at Harrisonburg High School, called the experience "a reality check," adding, "Seeing the devastation made me realize the power of water and how quickly things we consider important can suddenly be taken from us."—*Jim Bishop*

NEW MEMBERS

Bossler, Elizabethtown, Pa.: Joella Garber, Esther Good, Rebecca Good, Seth Hiller, Justin Sauder, Gloria Wise, Jim Wise, Clair Good, and Beth Good.

Covenant Community Fellowship, Lansdale, Pa.: Kate Rutt and Michael and Susan West.
Harris Hill, Williamsville, N.Y.: Titus Kauffman, Barbara Kauffman, and David Hildreth.
Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: Lacy King.
Landisville, Pa.: Suzanne Edwards, Greta Hertzler, Kimberly Shank, Melodie Smith, Emelene Reist, and Keith Weaver.
Sonnenberg, Kidron, Ohio: Brasos Mason.

BIRTHS

Arbaugh, Sharon Keeler and Joseph II, Stuarts Draft, Va., Katelyn Rose (fourth child), Sept. 2.
Basinger, Jyl Neuenschwander and Bruce, Dalton, Ohio, Seth Marcus (second child), Aug. 20.
Boersma, Angela VanderVoort and Siebren, Mitchell, Ont., Isaac Hart (second child), Aug. 23.
Boyer, Vanessa King and Dan, Strasburg, Pa., Micah Daniel (first child), Sept. 1.
Burklen, Karen Leis and Ron, Tavistock, Ont., Lucinda Joy (second child), May 29.
Combe, Marlene Hochstetler and Jim, Nampa, Idaho, Luke Jonathan (third child), July 24.
Cyr, Sandra Ruel and Allan, Brooks, Alta., Joshua Allan (first child), July 7.
Gingerich, Lori Bontrager and Craig, Mountain Home, Idaho, Allison Kay (second child), Sept. 9.
Hertz, Mary Plumer and Rick, Duchess, Alta., Brandon Matthew (third child), Aug. 8.
Hollinger, Lori Metzger and Luke, New Hamburg, Ont., Bryan Andrew (first child), Aug. 22.
Kaufman, Jill Hostetler and Douglas, Akron, Pa., Jacob William (second child), Sept. 11.
Lauber, Michele Sterling and Lonnie, Tofield, Alta., Torey Lynn (second child), Sept. 8.
Moore, Susan Bauman and Stephen, Kingston, Ont., Emily Ruth (first child), July 16.
Paddock, Bonny Potiuk and Cory, Duchess, Alta., Chandra Lynne (second child), May 29.
Peterson, Cara Plank, West Liberty, Ohio, Jordan Lee (second child), Aug. 30.
Poplett, Greta Cender and Jim, Minneapolis, Minn., Katrina Cender (second child), Aug. 13.
Roth, Susan Stuckey and Stan, Archbold, Ohio, Johanna Lynn (third child), Aug. 29.
Salch, Amy and Jeffrey, West Liberty, Ohio, Emily Rae (first child), Aug. 23.
Sauder, Kathy Beck and Patrick, Franklin, Tenn., Korrie Beck (second child), Aug. 28.
Sommers, Debra and Wendell, Hartville, Ohio, Riley Christian (second child), Aug. 29.
Stauffer, Bonnie Goertzen and Lanny, Beaver Crossing, Neb., John B. (first child), Dec. 20, 1995.
Stauffer, Sandra Litwiller and Vince, Milford, Neb., Nicholas Vincent (third child), April 12.
Steckly, Karen Steckle and Randy, Brunner, Ont., Katherine Elaine (second child), June 19.
Steiner, Stephanie Maxwell and Brent, Apple Creek, Ohio, Allyson Gwyn (second child), Sept. 1.
Stoltzfus, Laura Kiblinger and Karl, Keezletown, Va., Dalton Beiler (second child), Aug. 5.
Streicher, Cindy Kuepfer and Ervin J., Newton, Ont., Dustin Dale (third child), July 28.
Thomas, Sandra Yantzi and Christopher, Stratford, Ont., Emma Jean (third child), Sept. 10.
VanHooran, Lesia Martin and Douglas, Brooks, Alta., Colton Douglas (second child), July 10.
Yoder, Joan Gotwals and Terry, Leola, Pa., Alyse Gotwals (first child), born Jan. 18, 1996 received for adoption Aug. 5, 1996.
Zook, Dawn Root and Larry J., Manheim, Pa., Benjamin Jaycob (first child), Sept. 4.

MARRIAGES

Baer-Zilba: Frederick Baer, Grand Rapids, Ohio (Zion), and Elizabeth Zilba, Grand Rapids, Ohio, Sept. 7, by Dee Swartz.
Baus-Liestman: Erika Baus, Goshen, Ind. (Central), and Gregory Liestman, Goshen, Ind. (East Bend), July 27, by Steve Slagel.
Dietret-Ryan: Christopher Dietret, Stratford, Ont. (Avon), and Rachelle Ryan, Stratford, Ont. (Avon), Aug. 24, by Gary Horst.
Farran-Graber: Patrick Farran, Goshen, Ind. (Lombard), and Stacey Graber, Goshen, Ind. (Lombard), Aug. 3, by Bob and Mag Richer Smith.
Flanagan-McKean: Teresa Flanagan, Newport News, Va. (Warwick River), and Andy McKean, Newport News, Va., Aug. 30, by Gordon Zook.
Ham-Usher: Warren Ham, Stratford, Ont. (Avon), and Nicola Usher, Stratford, Ont. (Avon), May 11, by Gary Horst.
Johnston-Steiner: Dawn Johnston, Halifax, Pa. (Mountain View Fellowship), and Brad Steiner, Trout Run, Pa. (Longenecker), June 8, by Dan King and David M. Weaver.
Kessler-Snyder: Carl Kessler, Toronto, Ont. (Church of the Nazarene), and Jane Snyder, Toronto, Ont. (Erb Street), Sept. 1, by Doug Snyder (father of the bride).
Lantz-Leppert: Edie Lantz, Tucson, Ariz. (Shalom Mennonite Fellowship), and Daniel Leppert, Tucson, Ariz. (Shalom Mennonite Fellowship), May 25, by Leon Oberholtzer.
Leister-Souder: Nathan Leister, Souderton, Pa. (Zion), and Bronwen Souder, Telford, Pa. (Franconia), Sept. 14, by John M. Ehst.
Mason-Newenschwander: Brasos Mason, Wooster, Ohio (Sonnenberg), and DeAnn Neuenschwander, Kidron, Ohio (Sonnenberg), Sept. 7, by Dennis R. Kuhns and Henry Beun.
Maury-Teeter: Angela Maury, Milford, Neb. (Bellwood), and

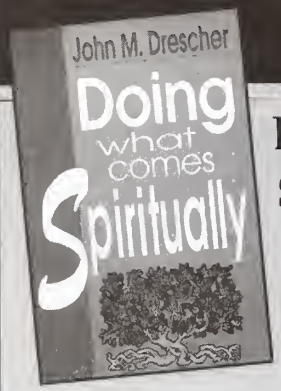
Question and answer. *Lancaster, Pa. (EMM)*—Wesley Newswanger (right), new director of the Mennonite Information Center (MIC), answers a visitor's question. Newswanger replaces Maribel Kraybill, who retired after eight years as director. Newswanger oversees the various MIC programs, such as a full-scale model of the Hebrew tabernacle; car and bus tours in English, German, French, Spanish, and sign language; and financial management and public relations. He also oversees 10 part-time staff people and more than 30 on-call tour guides.

MIC focuses on the faith and practices of the Mennonites and Amish. An associated ministry of Eastern Mennonite Missions, the information center began in response to a message by Nelson Kauffman at the 1958 Worldwide Missionary Conference, held at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. Later that year, MIC began its ministry in the basement of the First Deaf Mennonite Church. It was open only on Saturdays and served 15 people on a peak day.

In 1960, MIC moved from First Deaf Mennonite to the building currently housing the Mennonite Historical Society at 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster. MIC and the Historical Society shared the same building from 1960 to 1975. In May 1975, the present center was built at 2209 Millstream Road. In 1995 more than 55,000 people visited the center.

—Carol Wert

Spirit Fruit



Doing What Comes Spiritually

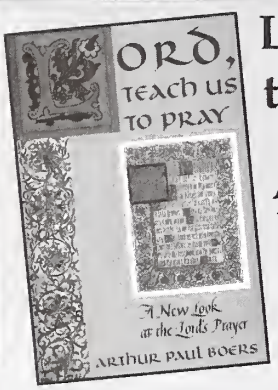
John M. Drescher

Are spiritual gifts a sure sign of the Holy Spirit's presence in a life? No, the gifts can be counterfeited. How then do we know when the Holy Spirit is at work? By seeing the fruit of the Spirit evident in everyday living. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control—this is the fruit whose growth in our lives indicates the Spirit's presence.
Paper, 328 pages, $12.95; in Canada $18.50.

Daily Fellowship with God

Larry W. Wilson

Using these daily meditations, readers are invited to fill their hearts with praise, be challenged to seek God's will, set daily goals for exercising their faith, claim the promises of God, and pray with thanks-giving. Saturate your conscious and subconscious mind with thoughts and words that lead to uplifting daily fellowship with God.
Paper, 384 pages, $7.95; in Canada $11.35.

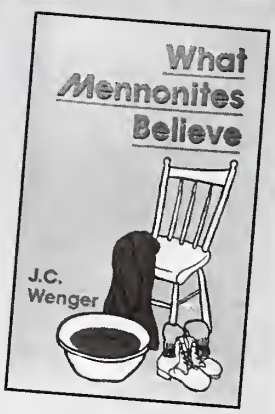


Lord, Teach Us to Pray

A New Look at the Lord's Prayer

Arthur Paul Boers

How often in the last year have you repeated the familiar words of the Lord's Prayer? Did you think about the meaning of those words? When did you first pray this prayer? Does it have more or less meaning for you now than the first time you prayed it? Boers offers fresh insight on the Lord's Prayer that will make the prayer more meaningful in your life.
Paper, 192 pages, $10.95; in Canada $15.75.



What Mennonites Believe

J. C. Wenger

This book is recommended for Mennonites as a helpful aid to explaining their beliefs and for those curious about the lifestyle of simplicity, biblical pacifism, strong sense of community, and service orientation of Mennonites. It explores beliefs held in common by Christians of all denominations and highlights those stressed by Mennonites.
Paper, 96 pages, $4.95; in Canada $7.10.

Available through your local bookstore or by calling **1 800 759-4447**

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Tyson Teeter, Johnson, Kan., Aug. 10, by Marlin Kym and Ron King.

Miller-Wolfer: Kari Miller, Corvallis, Ore. (Fairview), and Brian Wolfer, Medford, Ore. (Applegate Fellowship), Aug. 17, by Rick Showalter and Al Burkey.

Miller-Yoder: Laurie Miller, Scottdale, Pa. (Scottdale), and Derek Yoder, Frostburg, Md. (Pinto), Aug. 10, by David Boshart.

Moyer-Renner: C. Douglas Moyer, Perkasie, Pa. (Blooming Glen), and Diana B. Renner, Souderton, Pa. (Lutheran), Aug. 31, by David A. Stevens.

Sommerfeld-Zuercher: Lisa Sommerfeld, Kidron, Ohio (Sonnenberg), and Steve Zuercher, Orrville, Ohio (Chestnut Ridge), Aug. 31, by Dennis R. Kuhns.

Wurr-Zehr: Shelly Wurr, Cambridge, Ont. (Presbyterian), and Peter Glenn Zehr, Cambridge, Ont. (Riverdale), Aug. 17, by Robert Jackson.

DEATHS

Boshart, Dorothy Milletta, 75, Wellesley, Ont. Born: Jan. 1, 1921, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Noah S. and Victoria Wagler Boshart. Died: Sept. 1, 1996, Kitchener, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—brothers and sister: Roy, Orlin, Melvin, Verna Wagler. Funeral and burial: Sept. 4, Steinmann Mennonite Church, by Ingrid Loepp Thiessen and Herb Schultz.

Coon, Victor E., 73, Archbold, Ohio. Born: May 2, 1923, Wauseon, Ohio, to Cecil and Ella Grieser Coon. Died: Sept. 8, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Pauline Nofziger Coon; children: Clinton, Roland, Clifford, Cecilia Hughes; sister: Emagene Yingling; 13 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11, Central Mennonite Church, by Wilmer Hartman and Lois Hartman. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Flanagan, Agnes Lee Nines, 78, Dryfork, W.Va. Born: Dec.14, 1917, Laneville, W.Va., to Ella Nines. Died: Aug. 26, 1996, Warrenton, Va. Survivors—children: William Franklin, Alan, Betty Sue Wardrope; half sister: Virginia Branagan; 6 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Kermit Flanagan (husband). Congregational membership: Laneville Mennonite Church. Funeral: Aug. 30, Dryfork, W.Va., by Phil Kanagy. Burial: Rose Hill Cemetery.

Geiser, Anna Jean Amstutz, 64, Kidron, Ohio. Born: Feb. 22, 1932, Kidron, Ohio, to Amos D. and Velma K. Amstutz. Died: Aug. 19, 1996, Kidron, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—husband: Clayton Geiser; children: Sharon Amstutz, Les; stepchildren: Thomas, Keith, Norman, William, Anita Weaver; brother and sisters: Gordon Amstutz, Evelyn Jane Amstutz, Elaine Boyer; 2 grandchildren, 10 step-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Clayton W. Gerber (first husband). Funeral and burial: Aug. 22, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, by Dennis R. Kuhns and Richard Ross.

Landis, Alvin M., 79, Telford, Pa. Born: Oct. 16, 1916, Telford, Pa., to Samuel D. and Pearl Miller Landis. Died: Sept. 3, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Ruth D. Frankenfield Landis; children: Ray, Marilyn Garges; brother and sister: Ernest, Edna Clemmer; 8 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Rodney (son). Funeral and burial: Sept. 6, Rockhill Mennonite Church, by Mike Derstine and Merrill Landis.

Metzger, Stanley, 64, Waterloo, Ont. Born: Jan. 5, 1932, to George and Nancy Metzger. Died: Aug. 29, 1996, Kitchener, Ont. Survivors—wife: Alice Heintz Metzger; children: Fred, Stuart, Darcy; brothers and sisters: Vernon, John, Emmanuel, Ernie, Vera Martin, Rebecca Cressman, Erma Baker, Marie Fretz, Marlene Baker; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 1, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, by Don Penner. Burial: Hawkesville Cemetery.

Miller, Dale D., 71, Milford, Neb. Born: Dec. 22, 1924, Milford, Neb., to John and Lena Hauder Miller. Died: Aug. 16, 1996, Milford, Neb. Survivors—wife: Betty Troyer Miller; children: Layne, Todd, Amy Bellefeuille; brothers and sisters: Earl, Roland, Vyral Vannoy; 4 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Nancy Lee (infant daughter). Congregational membership: Beth-El Mennonite Church. Funeral: Aug. 19, Bellwood Mennonite Church, by John King. Burial: Blue Mound Cemetery.

Miller, Melvin, 60, Sarasota, Fla. Born: April 14, 1936, Arthur, Ill., to Aaron and Magdalena Miller. Died: Sept. 6, 1996, Sarasota, Fla. Survivors—wife: Mary C. Yoder Miller; children: Jean Versakos, Caroline Potter, Deborah Wyckoff, Roger; brothers and sisters: Jeff, Henry, Katie, Susan, Lovina; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, by Barry Loop and John Otto. Burial: Palms Memorial Park.

Mullins, Sharon Gerber, 43, Apple Creek, Ohio. Born: July 15, 1953, Orrville, Ohio, to Leo and Pauline Gerber. Died: Sept. 8, 1996, Apple Creek, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—husband: David Mullins; children: Jessica, Nicholas; mother; sisters: Jean Steffen, Connie Zuercher, Linda Miller, Sandy Gerber, Darlene Groves, Renee Himes, Kenis Steffen. Funeral and burial: Sept.11, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, by Michael Amstutz and Richard Ross.

Schertz, Rose Wagner, 94, Eureka, Ill. Born: July 10, 1902, Eureka, Ill., to Christian and Barbara Sauder Wagner. Died: Aug. 7, 1996, Eureka, Ill. Survivors—daughter: Thelma Zehr; brother and sisters: E. Sanford Wagner, Pearl Yoder, Celestia Stalter; one grandchild, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Christian A. Schertz (husband). Funeral and burial: Aug. 11, Roanoke Mennonite Church, by Elmer Wyse, Wilford Ulrich, and Robert Harnish.

Schultz, Elizabeth Lichti, 87, Ellice Twp., Ont. Born: Sept. 21, 1909, Wellesley Twp., Ont., to David and Barbara Schultz Lichti. Died: April 4, 1996, Tavistock, Ont. Survivors—children: Rita Schumm, Mary Ropp, Herbert, Alvin, Katherine Snyder, David, Phyllis Gropp; 21 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Mahlon Schultz (husband). Funeral and burial: April 7, Poole Mennonite Church, by Dave Rogalsky.

Schultz, Mahlon, 87, Ellice Twp., Ont. Born: March 22, 1909, North East Hope Twp., Ont., to Enos and Mary Jutzi Schultz. Died: March 22, 1996, Stratford, Ont. Survivors—wife: Elizabeth Lichti Schultz; children: Rita Schumm, Mary Ropp, Herbert, Alvin, Katherine Snyder, David, Phyllis Gropp; sister: Vera Yantzi; 21 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: March 25, Poole Mennonite Church, by Dave Rogalsky.

Shank, Mary Elizabeth Holsinger, 92, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: July 7, 1904, Edom, Va., to Henry and Elizabeth Cline Holsinger. Died: Aug. 21, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—children: Lucille Shank Allen, Elizabeth Shank Histand; brother and sisters: Justus Holsinger, Martha Browder, Catherine Miller; 9 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: E. Clayton Shank (husband). Funeral and burial: Aug. 27, Lindale Mennonite Church, by Loren Horst and Howard Miller.

Short, Ivan J., 78, Archbold, Ohio. Born: May 22, 1918, Archbold, Ohio, to John and Martha Wyse Short. Died: Sept. 3, 1996, Wauseon, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Dorothy Short; son: Wendell; sisters: Louella Bender, Arlene, Zelma Sieler; 1 grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 6, West Clinton Mennonite Church, by James Roynon, Dan Young, and Edward Diener. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Streicher, Michael, 77, Stratford, Ont. Born: Jan. 1, 1919, Wellesley Twp., Ont., to Enoch and Annie Wagler Streicher. Died: Aug. 13, 1996, Stratford, Ont., of Alzheimer's disease. Survivors—wife: Esther Kuepfer Streicher; children: Ervin, Raymond, Eunice Baker, Michael, Ruth Stemmler, Robert, Debbie Drumm; brother: Rudy; 13 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Aug. 16, Riverdale Mennonite Church, by Glenn Zehr.

Vink, Gabriel Austen, Chambersburg, Pa. Born: July 11, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa., to Gregory R. and Charlotte J. Jones Vink. Died: July 11, 1996, Hershey, Pa., of a congenital heart defect. Survivors—parents; grandparents: Anna P. Jones, Gordon D. and Martha E. Vink. Graveside service: July 16, Marion Mennonite Church Cemetery, by Cleon Nyce.

Weirich, Milo E., 81, Middlebury, Ind. Born: April 25, 1915, Allen County, Ind., to Levi and Elizabeth Zehr Weirich. Died: Aug. 25, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—wife: Verda Bollman Weirich; children: Loretta Hostetler, Janet Eby, Don, Dean; brothers and sisters: Harvey, Eli, Ida Miller, Rose Yutzy, Margueriette Lengacher, Naomi Schrock, Verna Helmuth; 11 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Geraldine Esch (daughter). Funeral: Aug. 28, First Mennonite Church, by Harold Yoder and Linford Martin. Burial: Grace Lawn Cemetery.

Newspaper

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Who's to go: liberals or conservatives?

Besides being an inspired theologian and a complex writer, the apostle Paul was also an ingenious fellow. In Acts 23:1-11, we find him hauled before the temple council for preaching a new way through Jesus. When he got there, Paul noticed his audience consisted of both Sadducees (who didn't believe in the resurrection) and Pharisees (who did).

So, to get the attention off himself, Paul brought up the subject of the resurrection. The resulting brouhaha became so violent that the authorities had to step in to restore order.

Were Paul among us today, his question might be, "Are you a conservative? Or a liberal?" I hope what resulted would not demand police intervention. But I suspect the feelings could be every bit as intense.

I remembered Paul and the temple council when reading the musings of Conservative Mennonite Conference's moderator in the September 1996 issue of *Brotherhood Beacon*. Levi Sommers told how one brother had confronted him during the conference's annual sessions with: "You guys—the executive committee and the ministerial committee—will have to decide whether you want the conservatives or the liberals to leave." Sommers said he replied that he hoped both would stay, that somehow the differences could be worked out.

Sommers' challenge becomes even more poignant given that last year Conservative Conference asked to no longer be considered an area conference of the Mennonite Church. Recognizing what it believed were significant differences in theology—particularly on the issue of women in leadership—the conference decided to go it alone. But already it is being pushed to draw the boundaries tighter, to declare who may and who may not belong.

Let the conference or congregation without such pressures be the first to cast a critical smile. The calls to draw the lines are on the increase among us. With those calls come temptations to assign labels and make assumptions about both beliefs and practices. "Liberals," we call from one side of the fence. "Conservatives" we retort from the other.

This pressure to label, to denigrate, to belittle becomes even more pronounced during an election year, which U.S. Mennonites are currently experiencing. One appears to have to be either for or against life, the poor, homosexuals, taxes, the future, the past. There's little or no room for moderation or another way.

Sadly, our political disagreements also become our theological arguments. In today's world, most of us are becoming much better at articulating what we're against than what we're for—even as Christians.

Meanwhile, as we argue, the real issues of our world persist: people who don't know God, people caught in poverty and racism; people experiencing violence and war; people controlled by greed and materialism.

Jesus stepped into this kind of world with this message: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:23).

For some, finding abundant life in Jesus Christ means adopting a tradition and a set of norms by which to order practice and being—a position the dictionary would define as "conservative." For others, finding abundant life in Jesus Christ means freedom from oppressive systems, believing and practicing without traditional forms—a position more "liberal."

Can these two be in the same church? Jesus hoped so. In a lengthy prayer to God (John 17:11-26), he asked for the unity of his disciples no less than four times.

As we dream about the Mennonite church of the future, dare we imagine one that can embrace both the liberal and the conservative approach to life in Christ? Maybe not in the same congregation. Or even in the same conference. But surely in the same denomination. If not, there must be rejoicing in the domain of the evil one.

Let there be no doubt about it: Jesus is our Savior and Lord. That is the banner around which both conservatives and liberals must rally. How that is worked out, of course, becomes the subject of our contention.

But let not our contention blind us to our primary mission: "so that the world may know." That, Jesus said, is the reason for our unity (John 17:24). When we lose sight of that goal, we become like the temple council of Acts 23, confusing even ourselves with our rhetoric and our labels.

Jesus as Savior and Lord is our tradition. Jesus as Savior and Lord is our liberation. Which must go from God's church? Neither, if we are true to the gospel of Jesus.—*jlp*

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October 8, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Shirley Kurtz:
Isn't a pulpit just a place to spread one's papers? 6

Ryan Ahlgrim & Randall J. Roth:
The top 10 rejected names for the integrated GC-MC church 7

Pastors of large churches discuss implications of size 9

Mennonites help to open welfare-to-work donut bakery 10

My vision for the Mennonite church (7):

Congregations that embrace new ideas

Who would have thought in 1996 that such a tiny denomination as the merged Mennonite church could make such a difference in our world for the kingdom?

by Arnold Cressman

It is 2006. It is not the best of times, nor is it the worst. Alvin Toffler was right in *Future Shock*—we are experiencing more change, and the speed of change itself is increasing. As the world changes, the church changes—mission agendas, the perception of need, priorities, even pieces of our theology. Some old and comfortable theological slippers are gently cast aside. We don't believe exactly as we did in early Sunday school years; rather, our theology follows our best and latest understanding of what God intends. Otherwise, why would it be necessary to update our confession of faith every 30 years?

Who would have predicted in 1996 that the world and the church would be standing where they now stand in 2006? The world is changing just as Jesus said it would. More people are hungry. Fewer have adequate shelter. The population explosion, though dampened, has not been halted. Wars break out with shocking regularity. The expanding unfarmable desert

Others are building mega-churches—and doing it well. Would it not be a better use of our energy to nurture what we already have rather than to borrow this vision?

eats up the fertile fringes. The Antarctic ozone bald spot gets larger. The last of the great oxygen-producing rain forests shrink menacingly. AIDS is corralled as a new disease appears.

Has it always been so, or are our circuits overloaded because we hear instantly all the bad news from our global village?

We can look back to 1996 and see how 10-year-old decisions have helped to bring us here. It was right for the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church to merge. We can fulfill our peace-and-justice mission more adequately now. It was right to adopt the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and the *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement. We are moving toward a very clear understanding of our denominational uniqueness and our particular gift to the kingdom of God.

Jesus' dream of a spiritual kingdom where peace and justice reign is being lived out among us around the world. Our Mennonite mission and service agencies are demonstrating that evangelical mission, rightly understood, is the "cup of cold water" given in the name of Christ. Christian Peacemaker Teams are deliberately walking into trouble spots, and their peace and justice stories inspire us daily. Ten years ago they came via Joe Campbell making peace in Northern Ireland, from Neal Blough who spoke peace to six French generals, from Calvin Shenk who stood between a Palestinian and his could-be assassin in Israel, from Denny Weaver showing a sympathetic presence in court for Haitian peasants, from Mennonite volunteers sniffing out bombies in Laos. Now these stories have become the very essence of who we are. We no longer need to search for an identity; we are people of peace and justice. Current "cup of cold water" and good Samaritan stories are being generated hourly.

Internal issues and disputes are rightly being crowded out of our one official denominational magazine and our World Wide Web page by positive, vibrant sagas of salt and light. Who would have thought in 1996 that such a tiny denomination as the merged Mennonite church would make such a difference?

The difference is made precisely because we have finally admitted that we cannot do everything. But we will do, by God's grace, what our Anabaptist heritage calls us to do. We will make our contribution in the area of our uniqueness—peace, justice, and love. We ask that Jesus will continue to build his church among us so the foundation for a peace and justice mission will be rock solid.

We now know a bit better how to take the "non" out of nonresistance. It gives Jesus' words of peace a much more aggressive stance. "Shalom" carries far more weight than we had imagined.

In the past ten years, we have been led by some of the best leaders, women and men, we have ever had. A powerfully unique denominational dream is now taking shape. The *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement of 1995 has given us a solid sisterhood-brotherhood basis for what is happening now. The managers of our institutions have learned anew that they are servants whose task it is to help our people toward the denominational dream. They see more clearly than others before them the difference between mission and maintenance. Have we now come through enough of our denominational adolescence, our inferiority feelings, our perception of ourselves as a tiny tribe-of-Benjamin people, that we can have an even greater dream? Of course we can. Once Mennonites were shoo-fly people, the other Amish, the biblical literalists with the oddest practices. Now "peace and justice" is the new synonym for the name Mennonite. All sorts of acronyms like MCC, CPT, MDS, MEDA, and new ones spell out the specifics.

Since we can look back 10 years from 2006 and see a transformed denomination, we can also look forward to 2016 and be sure that God's kingdom will continue to come. Jesus prayed it would.

Arnold Cressman, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., formerly worked in Christian education for the Mennonite Church and as an administrator at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. He is a member of the Mennonite Church of Scottdale.

by Hubert Schwartzentruber

Many meetings have taken place, airline tickets purchased, and high-powered speakers engaged since the Vision '95 goals for growth were initiated in the Mennonite Church. As a result, we have been challenged to take a new look at who we are as Mennonites.

Looking back at our achievements during the

Vision '95 emphasis, we can see some healthy, growing congregations. There were also some fast-growing congregations that are now dying. Some congregations value the same spirit of discipleship that was displayed in the Anabaptist beginnings. Other congregations bear no resemblance to our own rich tradition.

The *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement of the General Conference and the Mennonite churches invites us to look at our mission from a different perspective. It calls us to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, affirming our diversity and healing our brokenness.

I believe that the *Vision: Healing And Hope* statement calls us to become "cities of refuge" churches. Could we move our vision away from building mega-churches to a vision of building "cities of refuge" churches? Other groups are building mega-churches—and doing it well. Would it not be a better use of our energy to nurture what we already have rather than to borrow a vision that does not fit us?

I am not arguing that we should offer our culture, our traditions, or our style of doing church as a unique gift from God to the world. But the legacy we inherited from our 16th-century forebears is our gift: the understanding of community, discipleship, mutual aid, and nonviolence. That legacy does not come by accident of birth but through faith in Jesus who conquered the world. It is a legacy that is not bound by denominational labels but a choice of faith.

A "cities of refuge" church welcomes the people who are drawn to Jesus through the witness of faithful people. The church welcomes the alienated, the offender, the marginalized, and all those who have never experienced healing and hope. The cue must come from Jesus about who can be part of the church. If we are not good students of the life and teachings of Jesus, we stand in danger of turning someone away whom Jesus would accept. A new "cities of refuge" church would have the freedom to faithfully discern under the direction of the Spirit and the Scriptures about the life of their congregation and would covenant with the parent church in matters of fundamental faith principles. The larger body would agree to honor decisions that the group made in their discernment process. Culture and geographical settings may call for different applications from group to group.

How seriously do we take the *Vision: Healing And Hope* statement? If a congregation does not live up to this statement, can that congregation be removed from membership in the larger body? The statement calls us to enrich our prayer life and offer all that we are and have to God. It admonishes us to invite other people to faith in Jesus Christ and to offer love and respect to those whom we do not know or understand. It calls us to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace: and to practice love, forgiveness, and hospitality that affirms our diversity and heals our brokenness.

Hubert Schwartzentruber is former minister of missions for the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada. He currently serves on the Franconia Conference mission commission and as an overseer in Franconia Conference.

by Paul M. Lederach

My vision for the Mennonite church is that we would become a pilgrim church rather than a fortress church. These metaphors have a lot in common. Both embrace stories of the past, proclaim new life in Christ, and are concerned that Jesus' life and teachings become operational. Both stress peace, social justice, and community. Both claim scriptural undergirding, and both stand in need of grace.

A fortress view assumes we are already on the high ground. The task, therefore, is to preserve the church from the attacks of the world. Leaders demonstrate loyalty and are ready to defend the church, as it is, to the end. Serious questions are raised about which persons are allowed into the fortress, and changes are frequently seen as unfaithfulness. Developing tests for commitment sometimes takes precedence over developing vision.

A pilgrim view assumes we are on a journey. As Peter wrote, congregations are "exiles of the dispersion," are "aliens and strangers," and are in a "time of exile" (1 Peter 1:1, 17; 2:11). A pilgrim church knows its destination: "There will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11). There is no perfect map for the journey, however, because the future is both unknown and unknowable. Consequently, a pilgrim church finds its way step-by-step.

But there is memory. Peter, aware of this,

A pilgrim view assumes we are on a journey, aliens and strangers in a time of exile, facing an unknown future, but finding our way together step by step.

wrote to the churches to keep ever before them the "knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3). As an elderly church leader, Peter reminded the churches and helped believers recall the power, honor, glory, and the coming of Jesus. He committed himself to this: "I will see to it that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things" (2 Peter 1:15). The early church leaders understood that Peter was referring to his work helping Mark write his Gospel. The Gospels guide the steps of a pilgrim church.

A pilgrim church seeks leaders with gifts of vision and discernment. Changes in church life are made with confidence and with a sense of fulfilling Jesus' promises. For Jesus promised, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth . . . he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:12-15).

A pilgrim church impacts society wherever it is. Every nation is its homeland; yet in every homeland, it is a band of aliens and strangers. Its power is not derived from the political order, nor is its existence and ability to function dependent upon a sympathetic political regime. A pilgrim church is suspicious of materialism and is concerned about the bondage of consumerism It works to relieve the oppression of the poor. It understands that peace and justice go hand in hand (Psalm 85:10). It abstains from the passions of the flesh that war against the soul. It maintains good conduct among the pagans so that they may see their good deeds and glorify God (1 Peter 1:11, 12).

The metaphors of a fortress church and a pilgrim church are not mutually exclusive. Truth is found in both. As I reflect on my 50 years as a minister in the Mennonite church, however, I am thankful that we have moved from an exclusive to a more inclusive group. We have moved from an authoritarian enforcement of codes with an emphasis on achievement to a place of discernment and openness that receives and extends grace. May the fortress keep falling for us all.

Paul M. Lederach, Lansdale, Pa., is a retired minister who continues to be an overseer of four congregations in Franconia Mennonite Conference. He also teaches and preaches in various congregations and conferences.

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?"
—Matthew 21:42, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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Thanks so much for the inspiring and helpful editorial ***In Praise of 90-Year-Old Women: What Keeps Leaders Going*** (Aug. 27). You will be getting a pack of fan mail on that one.

I admire your skill in weaving three little stories into one presentation. Thank you—from one also in her nineties.

Alta Hostetler
Hesston, Kan.

Gospel Herald just can't seem to win. On one hand, it's criticized for not including a report on the presumably gay and lesbian conference, "Dancing at the Table" (Dutchersmith, "Readers Say," Sept. 10). On the other, a Mennonite couple cancels their subscription because *Gospel Herald* simply listed a conference by the Brethren / Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (Kennel, "Readers Say," Sept. 17).

I might ask the Kennels if they, "in good conscience," get any periodicals with ads for cigarettes or military schools. I might ask Ms. Dutchersmith how, assuming somehow we accept the notion of monogamous homosexual relationships, we accept bisexual relationships too. Or do we chuck the concept of monogamous also?

Then Brad Glick criticizes Valerie Weaver ("Readers Say," Sept. 10) as some kind of anti-imagination sourpuss who can't see the value of play because of her editorial ***This Business of Pretending*** (Aug. 20). In it she wrote that Disney gets enough money without Mennonites adding to it, and that affluent North American Christians live pretend lives (not just play) as a way to avoid the realities of extreme poverty and injustice some human beings just cannot escape.

On the other hand Gary Krabill ("Readers Day," Sept. 10) criticizes Joel Kauffmann's Pontius' Puddle (Aug. 20) for its humor "at the expense of . . . one particular U.S. political party." I looked at the cartoon and saw no political party mentioned but humor at the expense of the ideas of reducing taxes for the rich, cutting social programs for the poor, and creating greater weapons of mass destruction. If any party wants to own those positions, it deserves being the object of criticism and humor—unless, of course, we support those positions.

When Krabill says he "could create a similar scenario using a politician from another party," I must agree. Some of us feel that we have a political choice this year between one Republican candidate for president and another Republican candidate for president.

I don't know if life in the moderate, reasonable center is lonely, but it does have the disadvantage of having to shield oneself from barrages from more directions than life in the polarized extremes. Kudos to you: J. Lorne, Valerie, and Joel. Keep up the good work and continue to call 'em as you see 'em.

Robert Bristow-Johnson
Bloomfield, N.J.

Thanks for the editorial, ***Little Girls and Their Journals*** (Sept. 17). I am thankful that Valerie Weaver has found a forum in *Gospel Herald* where her ideas can be shared. The church needs both male and female leaders to effectively equip, encourage, and care for all its saints.

Pearl Lantz
Harrisonburg, Va.

As Go to the Pastors, So Goes the Church (Sept. 17). Thank you, Anne Stuckey, for hitting the nail squarely on the head. Pastors truly do need a more secure place to stand, where they can freely proclaim what God is putting in their hearts. How else can they ever be prophetic?

Someone has likened the authority of the church to a three-legged stool. The one leg represents the ministry, another the congregation, and the third the conference or denomination.

If any of these is missing, the preacher surely doesn't have a leg to stand on! Especially if he or she happens to avoid conflict. The conference then has to work with a few vocal people, since most congregations also avoid conflict.

Let's help pastors find their voices and their support. This will give them a more secure place to stand.

Samuel J. Troyer
Chambersburg, Pa.

I have just finished rereading ***As Go the Pastors, So Goes the Church*** (Sept. 17). To me, Anne Stuckey has clearly spoken to the problem of the triple (and often conflicting) roles that pastors are asked to play. I find that so often pastors are uncertain of the role their congregations expect of them because the congregations do not know what they expect.

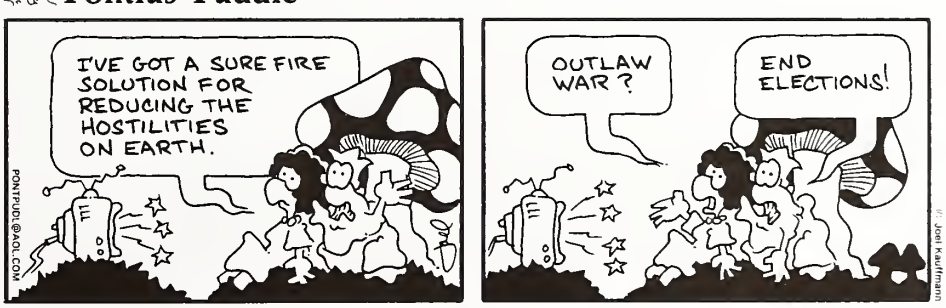
To Myron Augsburger's dream, I say, "Right on!" To develop a congregation that, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, is consciously recognizing and developing the gifts and calling of God in the lives of its youth, and then to play a proactive role in the selection and training of those leaders, is desperately needed in the Mennonite church today.

This is not a matter of method (use of search committees, seminary programs, or of the lot). It is a matter of attitude and mindset of God's people! This is a task for the congregation, not only for committees or professionals. Leaders must be chosen by the congregation—and be responsible to the congregation.

But it also means that pastors must welcome new leadership that is developing under their care and not feel threatened or intimidated when the time comes to share responsibilities. Walter Beachy stated it so well recently at a gathering of pastors, when he said that the greatest affirmation possible of a pastor's leadership is seeing young men of his congregation rise up into their ministry in a way that makes him look small!

Elmer H. Maust
Accident, Md.

Pontius' Puddle



Isn't a pulpit just a place

My mother preached a sermon all her life in spite of herself—a loud, extemporaneous one. It wasn't the "speechifying" kind, but I can see no difference.

by Shirley Kurtz

The argument Paulson and I were having at my house must have been a little nerve-racking for my mother, who couldn't help but overhear. I don't know why we were even looking in the Sears catalog; we would scarcely have enough money to buy groceries after our wedding, let alone brand-new appliances out of a catalog. But there we were anyway, disagreeing loudly about which would be the more practical choice: one of those big fancy side-by-side refrigerator freezers or the regular kind with the freezer section above the refrigerator. Paulson was so taken with the side-by-sides; I thought he was being thickheaded and obtuse.

My mother quietly endured all this, but later she tried to advise me. "If there's something to be decided, and you can't agree, let him make the decision, even if you think it's a bad choice," she said. "It won't be the end of the world, and he'll learn from his mistakes."

But I've never seemed able to do what she said. My mother also believes that women shouldn't be preachers. Whenever she was assigned a topic for a Sunday evening service, she'd carefully write out her thoughts. Then on Sunday evening she'd stand at the small lectern down in front—not behind the pulpit. She'd read her topic line-by-line so she wasn't outright "speaking," gesturing, or waving her arms and lording it over the men in the congregation.

She did permit herself to tell children's stories when she was assigned to lead children's meetings. The children would collect on a few front benches for their story before the main part of the service, so again she wasn't lording anything over the men in the congregation.

My mother's stories were wonderful moral lessons. In her "Tommy and the Watermelon" story, the neighborhood bully, Ben, goaded Tommy into disobeying his mother. Tommy's mother had been saving the watermelon in the refrigerator (I'm quite positive it wasn't a side-by-side) for a company meal; the watermelon wasn't to be touched. In her absence, the boys devoured the whole thing and hastily buried the seeds. Tommy told his mother a tramp must have come by and stolen the watermelon. Eventually, however, the seeds sprouted, and we all knew by the end of the story that your sins do, indeed, find you out (Num. 32:23).

Unlike my mother, I have seldom read off my script during a speech. And I certainly wasn't following her precedent the time I took a football along to church to use in telling my mother's watermelon story during children's meeting. I held out my football and dropped it right at the part of the story where Tommy and Ben let their watermelon splatter to the ground so they could eat it. My mother wouldn't have dreamed of carrying a football up front and unnerving the brethren.

My mother never would have brought fire down from heaven and melted the varnish off the lectern like I did one time during another children's meeting. I was telling the story about Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. I had built a little altar out of brown sugar in one of my mother's cake pans and then poured alcohol over it, which was supposed to look like water over the altar. It ran down the sides and into a puddle in the pan. When it came time for Elijah's prayer, I made the children shut their eyes, and I furtively lit the puddle. Unfortunately, my fire raged on and on; I'd neglected to pad the cake pan.

After we all left home, my mother worked part-time in a deli. She scurried around making sure the display cases were filled and the foods properly fresh; she wiped off counters and washed pots and pans; and once she accidentally stepped in a bucket of pickled eggs. She cheerily waited on people, sliced and wrapped their turkey ham and provolone, dished their pasta salads and rice puddings into little plastic cartons, and attached the price stickers.

Now Mother is retired; several days a week she goes along with my father (who is also retired) to the thrift store where they do volunteer work. My father lugs the heavy boxfuls of discarded clothing into the backroom, and she sorts through the clothes. The ugly but warm things go into huge cartons for Russia; the outlandish fashions get sent to a rescue mission in Lancaster, Pa.; things my mother considers decent get priced and hung up for sale in the store. Sometimes she'll take home and try to scrub the stain off a castoff that is otherwise very nice. Then she'll be pleased at the result, and some needy soul or

to spread one's papers?

bargain hunter rummaging through the clothing rack will be entirely thrilled with their "find." My mother, as far as I can tell, loves her job, even if it is lowly, backroom work.

"Do everything for the glory of God," she always used to remind me. This sounded too boring. Whenever we children got vicious and mean, she'd go around humming, "Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways." I rather resented that.

My mother earned her own bachelor's degree in theology before she married, but my father was the one who got ordained. She was content to listen to his sermons—very good ones, but with the same jokes repeated over and over—because she went along to other churches where he could reuse his material. She allowed him to make mistakes; she read the Bible the same way the church leaders read it. Of course, things like refrigerators were just side issues. It was important to be submissive and obedient, not prideful and never flashy.

Was preaching some particularly high and mighty task? Preaching what we believed about dying to ourselves and taking up Jesus' cross and being like him and washing each other's feet? (Pickled feet, I guess, in my mother's case.) Was saying these beliefs out loud behind a pulpit and microphone, and possibly bouncing or rocking a little on the balls of one's feet and gesticulating, a special lordly job? This is the part that has me stymied.

My mother has preached a sermon all her life in spite of herself—a loud, extemporaneous one. It wasn't the "speechifying" kind, but I can see no real distinction, considering her message and the main points about what we were all supposed to believe about servanthood.

Sometimes I think, "Why couldn't she stand at a pulpit? Isn't this just a place to spread one's papers?" But regardless of our differing views, I have to applaud her faithfulness, her absolute consistency.

Shirley and Paulson Kurtz live in Keyser, W.Va., and attend Pinto (Md.) Mennonite Church.

The top 10 rejected names for the integrated GC-MC church

by Ryan Ahlgrim & Randall J. Roth

10 The Only Orthodox and True Descendants of the Anabaptist Movement Mennonite Church

9 Quilters for Christ

8 The Church of Peace, Community, Discipleship, and Doing Things Cheaply

7 Not-the-Mormons Mennonite Church

6 Assemblies of Yoder

5 Not-the-Moonies Mennonite Church

4 The Church of Mostly European Ethnic (But We Really Are Trying to Be More Inclusive) Mennonites

3 Men-and-Womenite Church

2 Much More Liberal Than Amish, But Less Liberal Than Brethren, Mennonite Church

1 People of the Cookbook

Ryan Ahlgrim and Randall J. Roth are both pastors: Ahlgrim of the First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, Ind., and Roth of the Des Moines (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

World Council of Churches struggles with financial crisis

Severe staff and budget cuts of the World Council of Churches (WCC) have "created an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety," says Konrad Raiser, general secretary of WCC, but they "have not paralyzed our work." At the 47th meeting of the international ecumenical body in Geneva, Switzerland, Raiser called for simplification of the WCC's complex governing structures which he said tie up "too much energy and too many human and material resources." Personnel reductions represent a drop of about 20 percent, from 237 full-time equivalents in 1996 to a maximum of 190 in 1997.WCC will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1998 in Harare, Zimbabwe.

—*World Council of Churches*

Lotteries brought in more funds than churches in 1994

Lotteries receive more money than churches do, according to the Associated Baptist Press (ABP). When 1994 U.S. Census Bureau figures and the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches figures were compared, ABP discovered that $26.6 billion was spent on lotteries while $19.6 billion was given to churches.—*Messenger*

Vatican agrees to examine the role of the papacy in the future

The Vatican is cautiously supporting plans for a global church council in the year 2000 that would center on major issues that divide Christians, especially the role of the pope. According to the Aug. 5 *Prairie Messenger,* the pope has asked non-Catholic churches to suggest how papal supremacy can be exercised in a way that is acceptable to everyone. A recent apostolic letter from the pope stated that the approaching end of the second millennium "demands of everyone an examination of conscience and the promotion of fitting ecumenical initiatives." Konrad Raiser, secretary of the World Council of Churches, proposed the talks earlier this year.

—*Mennonite Reporter*

Former WCC secretary calls for support of Colombia peace efforts

A former general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has called Colombia "the most violent and dramatic situation in Latin America today," and he called upon churches around the world to "urgently support efforts to make peace in the country."

Emilio Castro represented the WCC on a fact-finding team that visited Colombia in July. The visit was organized by the Latin American Council of Churches following a request from the Lutheran, Mennonite, and Presbyterian churches in Colombia. Castro called upon the worldwide Christian community to "not only pray for Colombia but [also to] give concrete support for churches and other groups working for peace and justice in the country against incredible odds."—*WCC*

Sculpture of Noah allowed to remain in children's zoo

The committee in charge of redesigning the Children's Zoo in New York's Central Park wants to do away with sculptures of Noah and Jonah's whale, according to the *AFA Journal.* The committee says public money should not be used for statues that reflect a religious theme. But parks commissioner Henry J. Stern says that Noah should not be viewed only as a biblical character but as the first conservationist and the sculpture should stay.—*The Mennonite*

Religious "shopping mall" opens on Internet

The Gospel Communications Network (GCN) announced on Aug. 26 the grand opening of "The GCN Mall"—a virtual mall that sells ministry-related software, literature, videos, and youth ministry resources. The electronic mall features various floors, elevators, aisles, and salespersons and recorded over 5,500,000 "hits" (visits to the Internet site) in August.—*GCN*

United Methodist Church joins boycott of tobacco industry

The United Methodist Church has joined a boycott of the tobacco industry. All United Methodist agencies and related institutions have been requested by the governing body to "consider the role of Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco in tobacco marketing as a factor in any decision in purchasing food products manufactured by them." The United Methodist Church has previously endorsed boycotts of General Electric and Nestle.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Southern Baptists in Texas convert to Judaism

Six Southern Baptist families from Palestine, Texas, have joined their pastor in converting to Judaism, according to Ecumenical News International. Another 14 families from other churches have joined the group as well. One member said, "We started out as Christians examining the Hebrew roots of our faith." She added that she decided that "the New Testament just does not line up to the Old Testament."—*Mennonite Reporter*

Number of Christians in Shanghai grew by 200 percent in 10 years

The number of Christians in Shanghai, China, has risen by more than 200 percent in the past ten years, according to the Shanghai Christian Council. There are now 127,000 baptized Protestants in the municipality. They are served by 41 pastors, 120 evangelists, and more than 120 elders.

—*Amity News Service*

IRS seizes title to house and land of war tax resisters in Maine

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service seized the title to the house and land of Elizabeth Gravalos and Arthur Harvey, war tax resisters who live near Hartford, Maine, in April. On June 19, the IRS took sealed bids on the property, which includes a house, woodlots, and blueberry fields. Prior to that auction, supporters of the family raised $2,000 in a "mock sale" that went to pay off the local property tax liens of seven local families. Organizers noted the irony of the federal government spending billions of dollars for the military while cutting programs that benefit the poor.—*The Mennonite*

"Prayer is not a way of being busy with God instead of with people. In fact, it unmasks the illusion of busyness, usefulness, and indispensability. It is a way of being empty and useless in the presence of God and so of proclaiming our basic belief that all is grace and nothing is simply the result of hard work."

—*Henri Nouwen*
The Living Reminder

Pastors of large churches talk about implications of size

Hesston, Kan. (GCMC)—"Mennonites are still thinking small, not only in terms of size, but also style," said Roland Reimer. Compared to other denominations, Mennonites, for the most part, do not have big churches, said Reimer, who spoke here at a Sept. 9-11 meeting of pastors of larger, multiple-staff congregations.

The 62 participants represented Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, and Mennonite Brethren (MB) congregations that ranged in size from 200 to 800. The majority came from towns and rural communities in southcentral Kansas, although a few traveled from out-of-state locations such as Phoenix, Ariz., and Altona, Man.

Pastor or coordinator? "Why can't Mennonites buy into big?" asked Reimer, MB conference minister from Wichita, Kan. Roots as an immigrant and primarily rural people make it difficult for Mennonites to make the leap to a large church mentality, he said.

Mennonites also are worried, he said, that a large congregation would violate the highly-valued covenant community. But, argued Reimer, history has shown that God's people have gathered in small and large groups. "What is important is good communication," he said, observing that size can be a determining factor in the future of a denomination.

Many at the meeting said they felt ill-prepared to deal with the realities of a larger, multiple-staff congregation. "I always assumed I would be a pastor, not a coordinator of a management team," said Randy Klaassen, pastor at Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Altona.

David Mann, who spoke on "Decision Making in Larger Churches," encouraged open discussion about the implications of size. A pastor at Hesston Mennonite Church, Mann had his congregation examine this issue during a Sunday morning worship. There was "an 'aha' response" as the members looked at where they fit in a profile of church size, said Mann. "When you are smaller, you can rely on the wisdom within the body," he added. "With a larger church, you need to do more research. You also need more definition on who has authority to make decisions. . . . You can't use consensus."

—*Carla Reimer*

David Mann, pastor at Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church, speaks at a gathering of pastors of large churches.

Stevan and Mileva Vezmar open a Mennonite Central Committee refugee kit that was packed in Manitoba. They are refugees from the Krajina region of Serb descent. In August 1995 they fled to Serbia; however, they do not have Serbian citizenship and do not qualify for work permits. MCC is again requesting donations of Christmas boxes for refugees this year.

MCC asks for donations of Christmas boxes

Akron, Pa.—When Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) issued a call for refugee kits for the former Yugoslavia, Mennonites across North America responded, raising triple the number of kits MCC hoped to send. Now MCC is hoping to help support, with food assistance, more than 4,000 refugee families for six months.

"The response was overwhelming," says Kevin King, material resources manager for MCC, at MCC U.S. executive committee meetings, Sept. 13-14, of last year's success.

In the fall of 1995, when his office issued the call for kits to help refugees in the former Yugoslavia, they thought perhaps they could generate 2,000 packages. They received 7,700 kits, most of which were distributed last winter and spring.

MCC is again asking individuals and groups to donate cash (so food may be purchased in the region) or to prepare Christmas food boxes to be sent to families in the former Yugoslavia this year.

Items should be packed in an appropriate-size box with lid and sealed with tape—lightly, because contents must be checked before shipment. To the top of the box, an envelope with $8 (U.S.) to cover shipping costs should be attached, and the box should be delivered to the nearest provincial or regional office by Nov. 8. Monetary contributions can be sent to local offices, with project #5834/2302 written on the check.

A Christmas food box should contain the following items:

- 5 pounds all-purpose flour
- 5 pounds sugar
- 3/4 to 1 1/2 pounds salt
- 1-2 pounds nonfat dry milk powder
- 2 pounds spaghetti
- 2 quarts cooking oil (plastic jar)
- 3-4 pounds peanut butter (plastic jar)
- 2 pounds jam (plastic jar)
- 2 pounds rice
- 4 family-size bars bath soap
- 12-18 ounces shampoo
- 100 tablets multi-vitamins
- family-size tube toothpaste
- box of 24 tea bags
- package of 24 sanitary napkins
- 1 box cookies (if space allows)

A Christmas greeting with name and address may be enclosed, if desired.

—*Larry Penner*

A dream (ful)filled:
Mennonite church helps to open welfare-to-work donut bakery

Waukesha, Wis.—The new donut shop opening at 404 West Main Street on Oct. 15 is hardly your typical breakfast joint.

For starters, the featured recipe is an old Pennsylvania Dutch favorite for potato donuts from the mother of Lawrence Kratz, co-pastor along with his wife, Clarice, at Maple Avenue Mennonite Church, Waukesha, Wis.

But the recipe isn't the only quirky thing about the shop. Managed by Clarice Kratz, the nonprofit bakery will employ four or five people for three months at a time in what is called a "transitional employment project." As part of a program to help people move from welfare to work, the trainees will also attend classes at a technical college. Because they're employed, they continue to receive county public assistance, says Clarice, who works closely with the trainees' social workers and teachers.

"The major goal is not to learn to make donuts and pecan rolls," says Clarice. "It's to develop stable and healthy work skills." Besides learning "soft skills" such as regular attendance, personal hygiene, and promptness, the trainees at the bakery will attend a weekly support group meeting that will cover issues such as budget planning. After persons end their term with the shop, volunteer mentors will help them find jobs and then stay in touch with them for six to eight months.

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The donut shop is one of a number of welfare-to-work programs that are developing in a response to the state's constantly fluctuating welfare legislation, says Clarice. The bakery and other pilot programs in Wisconsin allow people to receive public assistance money during the critical time between welfare and permanent employment.

The Maple Avenue congregation had been looking for ways to minister to the community for a long time. They became members of a coalition of 40 local churches called the Cooperating Congregations of Greater Waukesha (CCGW), which eventually started the donut shop project.

"We wanted to understand what we brought to the community. One of these things was donuts," says Lawrence.

Selling homemade donuts had become a traditional fundraiser for Maple Avenue. Advertising them as "Mennonite donuts," the congregation sold them at sidewalk sales in Waukesha every year.

Clarice and Lawrence first got the idea for starting a donut shop when they witnessed a similar initiative in Chicago during a year in an urban ministry program of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

The idea of opening a donut shop to provide jobs for low-income people simmered for a number of years until Lawrence proposed the idea to the new director of CCGW, where he has worked as social minister since 1987.

When a bar across the street from CCGW offices came up for sale, the group decided to buy it.

Since this spring, volunteers from Maple Avenue and numerous other churches have been busy purchasing donut-making equipment and remodeling the building, which is sandwiched between two bars. The bakery's name is still under consideration but is down to three choices—Donuts on Main, Holy Donuts, or Donuts on The Rise. The shop has four tables and a delivery service. It sells glazed, sugared, and powdered donuts, pecan rolls, and coffee.

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The congregation is also exploring opening a daycare center in their church building. A committee is researching zoning requirements, but their hopes are high that they'll be able to provide daycare services for those who work in the donut shop and other places and who have no place to keep their children.

Lawrence and Clarice expect their lives to be a lot fuller now that both are working full-time in the community as well as pastoring. But they're grateful to their congregation for helping the donut shop dream come to fruition.

"Our congregation has offered us to the community as a ministry of the Mennonite church there," says Lawrence, "and not felt shortchanged."

—*Valerie Weaver*

MCC aids latest victims of violence in Iraq

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is helping to supply food to Kurdish refugees in Iran, who are the latest victims of renewed violence in Iraq. The Iraqi Kurds fled to Iran following Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kurdish territory in northern Iraq early this month.

As of Sept. 23, more than 67,000 Kurds had registered in five refugee camps hastily established by the Iranian Red Crescent Society. An additional 150,000 Kurds are waiting at the Iranian border. The Iranian Red Crescent Society quickly exhausted its stock of relief supplies and appealed to the international community for assistance.

MCC initially contributed $10,000 (U.S.) to the Iranian Red Crescent Society to buy food locally. "This was an expression of our solidarity with them," explains Ed Martin, who directs MCC programs in Southern and Central Asia. "We wanted to do something quickly."

MCC then worked through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to supply an additional $72,750 (U.S.) to the Iranian Red Crescent Society for food purchases. MCC plans to send comforters and warm clothing also and is discussing shipping some food commodities through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

U.S.-imposed economic sanctions against Iran have hampered MCC aid. The Chase Manhattan Bank in New York refused to wire money to Iran, citing the sanctions. Due to the emergency nature of the situation, MCC transferred funds through its Canadian office.

History of cooperation. The Iranian Red Crescent Society has reported a limited response by the international community to its request for help in caring for the Kurdish refugees. Officials also noted they expect the refugees to remain in Iran for some time.

Since 1991, MCC has also cooperated with the Iranian Red Crescent Society to assist Iraqi refugees who fled to Iran as a result of the Persian Gulf War.

The Kurds are a distinct minority group found in Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. They have no homeland of their own.—*Pearl Sensenig*

Sheri and Dennis Brooks take part in Festival 96 in July. They were commissioned to serve another term with Eastern Mennonite Missions and Lithuania Chrstian Fund in Lithuania.

Brooks help Lithuanians to develop existing vision

Salunga, Pa. (EMM)—Even before the *glasnost* years, the Soviet Union began allowing its people to emigrate. Many Mennonites returning to their ancestral homes in Germany passed through Lithuania.

A community of about 300 settled in the city of Siauliai for a short time and formed a congregation. These Mennonites reached out to young people in the community. Otonas Balciunas and a young woman named Raimonda, who eventually married, were two of those young people who became believers.

After the congregation moved on, Otonas began to meet with other believers and dreamed of ways he could help his fellow citizens despite the persecution of the Soviet regime.

'Translating' theology. Dennis and Sheri Brooks, Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) workers who returned to Lithuania on Sept. 4, have become friends with Otonas and Raimonda Balciunas and are part of Otonas Balciunas' vision. The couple serves with EMM and the Lithuania Christian Fund, a charity organization which Otonas Balciunas developed.

"Balciunas has a very strong vision for the church," says Dennis Brooks. "It's a church that lives their faith."

As a young believer, Balciunas read his Bible and discovered that Christians are called to meet the needs of others. Seeing the condition in Lithuania, he bought a truck and began to haul food and literature from Germany to Lithuania. That ministry turned into a trucking company, which is now the principal source of funding for the Lithuania Christian Fund (LCF).

Otonas Balciunas is president of LCF, which today includes Liberal Arts Christian College (formerly Lithuania Christian College) and Jona Publishing, one of the primary Christian publishers and distributors in the nation.

"Balciunas feels that to build the church is to build the nation," says Dennis. "Theology is translated through the church, through the action of the work of the body."

LCF recently purchased a 200-year-old baron's palace in Siauliai which was destroyed in World War II. The building is being renovated and houses the LCF offices, the first Free Christian Church, and will soon house the Siauliai English Community program and the Ginkunai Bible School.

Dennis Brooks will help to further develop the Bible school, which has been operating at a minimal level and offering the same courses for the past three spring semesters. Leaders involved in their churches and home groups throughout the country study in the Lithuanian language for three days each week and then return home for four days to apply what they have learned.

Vision to reality. Dennis Brooks will help to develop the curriculum and direct the program. The school is intended to have a "discipleship aspect as well as theological training," he says.

While Sheri Brooks will help to teach at the Bible school, her main focus will be to establish the Siauliai English Community program, similar to the one she worked with in a town on the Baltic coast. The program will offer English classes at the LCF headquarters, as well as provide English classes at business locations within the community.

"It's special for us to be part of helping Balciunas see God's vision become a reality," says Sheri.—*Carol Wert*

A Mennonite member of the Paraguayan congress is spearheading efforts to safeguard the Chaco, an ecologically vital region of Paraguay settled by Mennonites. Heinrich Ratzlaff Epp, whose parents arrived in Paraguay after World War II with a group of several hundred Mennonites fleeing the Soviet Union, has pushed for the passage of environmental laws to protect the land and wildlife of the Chaco. Home to more than 400 bird species, including seven found nowhere else in the world, the Chaco is increasingly threatened by development.

Ratzlaff, also a church leader and psychologist, helped to start the Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Chaco in March 1995, an organization that works to strengthen existing national parks in the Chaco and to identify and protect the areas highest in biological diversity.

"God says we should take care of his creation—not destroy it but to keep it so that we can pass it on to our children," he says.

—*Nature Conservancy*

Paint-the-Town Day in Wichita, Kan., on Sept. 21, meant a lot of volunteers painting the town more than just red. Over 800 volunteers painted 50 homes of low-income residents during the day, putting two coats of paint on each home. The day was part of Mennonite Housing's home repair program to help senior citizens with low incomes and people with disabilities.

The average household income for families served in the program is just under $10,000, with 88 percent of the people over the age of 60.

—*RoofLine*

Springs (Pa.) Mennonite Church built a Lego house this summer as a symbol of the contributions they made to Mennonite Disaster Service's work to rebuild the Mount Zoar Baptist Church, Boligee, Ala., that was destroyed by arson on Jan. 11. For three Sundays, Sandy Brenneman accepted donations at a card table following the worship service. Those making contributions could add a Lego brick to a small-scale church. Members raised $2,184.

—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

***Nightline* has a new intern**—and she is a 1996 graduatue of Goshen (Ind.) College. Debbie Loh, a communication major from Malaysia, is the second Goshen student to work with the ABC news program hosted by Ted Koppel.

Loh is one of four interns in ABC's Washington bureau.

—*Goshen College*

Nazareth Village project gets conditional support

Chicago, Ill. (MBM)—More than 40 church leaders, mission experts, and veterans of Middle East service, meeting here at the invitation of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), outlined some issues needing resolution before a proposed visitors center in Nazareth, Israel, becomes a reality.

"This may be the time," said David Dyck of Mennonite Brethren Missions / Services at a Sept. 22-23 consultation on the Nazareth Village, on behalf of a listening committee that included David W. Shenk of Eastern Mennonite Missions and Roy Kreider, former MBM worker in Israel. "There is strong agreement that a visitors center should be developed on the condition that strong local ownership is assured," said Dyck.

In a meeting of the Mennonite Middle East Reference Group, some participants asked, "Would Jesus want a visitors center?"

"I have been to Nazareth, and I didn't go on a tour bus," said Ed Epp, MCC secretary for the Middle East. "I did see Jesus. I saw him in Bob Martin, [former MBM worker at Nazareth Hospital]. How is the best way to show Jesus of Nazareth? Is it in spinning yarn and making bread or in healing people?"

MBM is among several partner organizations that are testing the feasibility of Nazareth Village, a re-created first-century village and interpretive center that would illuminate the life and teaching of Jesus in his hometown.

"There is a deep desire on the part of all visitors to see Christ, to see Jesus, except what we see there now are stones and monuments," said Nakhle Bishara, the medical director of Nazareth Hospital and author of the concept. "The local churches think that this concept would strengthen a Christian presence and would strengthen the Christian witness of the churches."

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Edinburgh (Scotland) Medical Missionary Society, which founded Israel's oldest hospital in 1861, has designated 12 acres of adjacent land for Nazareth Village. MBM worker D. Michael Hostetler, a veteran videographer, is directing a feasibility study scheduled for completion in spring 1997. Other partners are Menno-Hof, The Troyer Group, and The Nazareth Project, Inc.

But John A. Lapp, former executive

Nakhle Bishara, an Arab-Israeli Christian doctor, initiated the idea for a visitors center in Nazareth.

secretary of Mennonite Central Committee, asked how Western mission organizations, such as MBM and EMM, should participate in the project—and whether they should participate at all. "The time has passed when Western agencies should establish or govern or lead such projects," Lapp said in one of two keynote responses. "Now is not the time to continue the Western dependency, but rather to start locally with a new, fresh, and vigorous vision." Lapp, saying he was moved by Bishara's testimony, encouraged the local board of Nazareth Hospital to "develop a moderate visitors center, commensurate with the resources available in Nazareth."

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"You wouldn't believe how many backpackers find themselves in the Middle East looking for something and they don't know what," said Randy Friesen of Mennonite Brethren Missions / Services, who says his life was changed as he wandered away from his Mennonite roots in the Middle East. "It would be wonderful if we could intersect some of these lives."

The two days of discussion highlighted concerns already being examined by planners, including authenticity of presentation, involvement of leadership from the Middle East church, and financial investment appropriate to the project.

Organizers anticipate structures that represent the Christian faith across denominational lines and geographic borders. "It is not intended to be a Mennonite project," said MBM president Stanley Green. "Our hope is that it will be a project as broad as the Christian church."—*Tom Price*

Selfhelp Crafts becomes Ten Thousand Villages

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Selfhelp Crafts of the World, a program of Mennonite Central Committee, changed its name to Ten Thousand Villages, effective Sept. 20.

The name change comes as a result of frequent confusion about the store. Staff of the third-world marketing program say that customers have thought the stores were crafts supply shops.

"We want to give a clear and consistent message about who we are, what we do, why we do it, who we do it with, and how people can become involved," says director Paul Myers.

The inspiration for the name Ten Thousand Villages comes from a quotation by Mahatma Gandhi: "I have believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 700,000 villages. But we town dwellers have . . . hardly ever paused to inquire if these poor folk get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves."

Over the next year, many shops throughout North America will assume the new identity.—*Deborah Fast*

Planners for Orlando 97 adult convention meet

Orlando, Fla. (MCGB)—Planners and worship leaders for the next General Assembly and adult churchwide convention met in Orlando recently to arrange the sessions, scheduled for July 29-Aug. 2, 1997.

Evening worship sessions will center on the Gospel of Mark. Shirley Hershey Showalter, Myron Augsburger, Roy Williams, Janice Yordy Sutter, and Owen Burkholder will preach during evening meetings.

Other elements of worship will include the original theme song, "God Calls Us," newly-written dramas performed by Southeast Conference congregation members, and "holy moments" which help participants actively worship.

Worship leader and planning committee member Heidi Regier Kreider, Gainesville, Fla., says the most challenging aspect of planning worship is "trusting that the Holy Spirit can take our plans for worship and use them to surprise us with the depth of God's grace and to create within us a new passion for radical discipleship."

- **Workers commissioned.** The largest group of Youth Evangelism Service (YES) participants ever was commissioned on Sept. 14. Twelve YES teams were charged by Discipleship Ministries of Eastern Mennonite Missions to "go as learners." The 93 commissioned workers included several people beginning Voluntary Service assignments and Discipleship Center support staff positions.

- **Moderator elected.** Michael Badasu was elected as moderator of the Ghana Mennonite Church during its 34th annual conference. The conference also elected five executives during the Sept. 15-18 conference. The theme was "All the Way with the Lord" (Heb. 6:1-12).—*G.B.K. Owusu*

- **Pulpit for sale.** Antique chancel furniture for church is for sale from Charlottesville (Va.) Mennonite Church. Five-piece hardwood set is of a classic design. More information from 804 296-5289.

- **Forms available.** Forms to report new members, births, marriages, and deaths to *Gospel Herald* are available to churches. Contact the *Gospel Herald* office at 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683; phone 412 887-8500.

- **New appointments:**

Lara Hall, associate convention coordinator for Orlando 97, Mennonite Church General Board offices, Elkhart, Ind.

Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, director of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries, Akron, Pa.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Rafael Barahona terminated as pastor of Iglesia Evangelica Emanuel, South Bend, Ind., in August.

Rob Ganger was licensed as youth minister at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Aug. 25.

Jay Miller ended a pastorate at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon, Mich., on Aug. 18.

Bill Scott was ordained on Sept. 22 for pastoral ministry at Ninth Street Mennonite Church, Saginaw, Mich.

Jay Ulrich ended a pastorate at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak, Mich., on Sept. 29.

Luke Yoder began as interim pastor at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church on Aug. 18. He was installed as overseer at Fairview (Mich.) Mennonite Church on Sept. 29.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Alice Ann Beachy left for Djibouti in September for a two-year assignment with Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Dennis and Sheri Brooks returned to Lithuania on Sept. 4, after a three-month home leave.

David and Susan Reeve began a one-year assignment in September with Eastern Mennonite Missions in Mexico City.

- **Coming events:**

250th anniversary celebration, Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa., Oct. 19-20. Includes pig roast, children's activities, and storytelling by John Ruth. More information from 215 766-8380.

- **New resources:**

What Governments Can Do: Hunger 1997, a report released by Bread for the World, discusses the current debate about the roles governments play in reducing hunger around the world. Contains data about child hunger in the U.S. Available from 301 608-2400.

- **Job openings:**

English faculty position, Goshen (Ind.) College. Full-time, tenure-track position includes teaching general education courses in literature and writing, preferably with one or more of the following special interests: Victorian literature, modern British literature, composition, or women's literature. Doctorate required. Applications accepted until Dec. 15. Send curriculum vitae and three professional references to John D. Nyce, interim academic dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

- **Change of address:**

Emma and J. Mark Frederick, Jr., Calle Tecoh 450, Col. Pedregal de San Nicolas, Del. Tlalpan, cp 14100, Mexico DF, Mexico.

NEW MEMBERS

Beth-El, Colorado Springs, Colo.: Nathan Bartel, Rachel Swartzendruber, and Tina Troyer.

Duchess, Alta.: Holly Schnell, Lesia Van Hooran, Shawn Hansen, Randy Lauber, Levi Smoker, Wilma Smoker, Leslie Virovec, and Carolyn Virovec.

First, Canton, Ohio: Wendy Ballard Miller.

First, Indianapolis, Ind.: Beth Mast.

First, Kitchener, Ont.: Dan Epp-Tiessen and Esther Epp-Tiessen.

Hopedale, Ill.: Ada Litwiller.

Howard-Miami, Kokomo, Ind.: Ehrin Mast, Luke Miller, Chad L. Miller, and Derek Yoder.

Millersburg, Ohio: Chris Anderson, Tom Michaels, Cheryl Michaels, John Michaels, and Andrew Michaels.

Pine Grove, Stryker, Ohio: Bethany Kay Shue and Jordan Short.

Pittsburgh, Pa.: Jennifer Seaman.

West Clinton, Wauseon, Ohio: Shawn Waidelich.

BIRTHS

Abbott, Gail Roth and Jamie, Kitchener, Ont., Michael James Sheldon (first child), Sept. 11.

Bachman, Lori and Tracy, Fort Dodge, Iowa, Amanda Nicole (first child), June 28.

Bilen, Rita Schrock and Sheridan, Stryker, Ohio, Andrew James (second child), July 9.

Brubaker, Donna Boll and Kevin, Lancaster, Pa., Allison Morgan (second child), Aug. 16.

Christopher, Rachel, Cobbs Creek, Va., Cameron (first child), Sept. 10.

Cranor, Kathy Young and Jeff, Greentown, Ind., Heidi Katarina (fourth child), Sept. 8.

Fahndrich, Pam Brunk and Tim, Salem, Ore., Elyssa Renae (first child), Sept. 14.

Frey, Sharon Kramer and Robert, Hereford, Pa., Brandon Lee (second child), Sept. 6.

Grosmick, Tami Honsaker and William, Monrovia, Md., Evan Michael (second child), July 29.

Grow, Dawn and Nelson, North Wales, Pa., Adrian Joseph (third child), Aug. 28.

Hall, Cathey and Greg, Williamsburg, Va., Simon Jesse (fourth child), Aug. 22.

Kauffman, Janine Unruh and Gordon, Newton, Kan., Erich Kasanzu (first child), Sept. 17.

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
invites applications for the position of:

Executive Director

Starting date: March 1997
Location: Akron, Pennsylvania
Applications will be accepted
through October 18, 1996.

Direct inquiries and applications to:
Rich Garber, Chair, Search Committee
17270 Northside Blvd., Nampa, ID 83687
Phone: 208-467-3519
Fax: 208-467-2022

Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S.
21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500
Akron, PA 17501-0500
(717) 859-1151 (717) 859-3889

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9
(204) 261-6381

Knepp, Laverda Coblentz and Ryan, Iowa City, Iowa, Cody James (first child), Sept. 11.
Kropf, Tracey Brenneman and Larry, Kitchener, Ont., Erika Ruth (second child), Aug. 25.
Kulp, Julie Knechel and Loren J., Sellersville, Pa., Monica Danielle (second child), Sept. 7.
Kuncheff, Lori Honsaker and David, Germantown, Md., Adam David (first child), July 26.
Mast, Terri Chestnut and Jerry, Orlando, Fla., Tyler David (first child), Sept. 5.
Meyers, Cheryl Hollinger and Timothy, Quakertown, Pa., Sabina Rachelle (first child), Aug. 31.
Miller, Deborah Nofziger and Derrick, Canton, Ohio, Grant Christian (second child), June 27.
Moyer, Barbara Shroyer and David, Boswell, Pa., Karlee Elizabeth (first child), May 22.
Nice, Beverly Derstine and Jeffrey, Hatfield, Pa., Hunter Ellis (fourth child), Sept. 4.
Porter, Pamela Moyer and Michael, Jersey Shore, Pa., Cameron David (first child), June 18.
Rose, Priscilla Rittenhouse and Robert, Quakertown, Pa., Rachel Ming (second child), Jan. 2.
Roth, Connie Sohl and Jeff, Waterloo, Ont., Austin Isaiah (first child), Sept. 13.
Sauder, Cindy Yoder and Kurtis, Charlottesville, Va., Zackary Robert (first child), June 24.
Scheuerman, Brenda Myers and Tom, Lancaster, Pa., Jordan Patrick (first child), Sept. 17.
Schloneger, Mandy Cufr and Randy, Carmel, Ind., Emily Ann (second child), Aug. 22.
Sisombath, Onh, Kitchener, Ont., Praxedes Roma (fourth child), June 30.
Troyer, Leora Miller and Robert, Canton, Ohio, Andrew Moses Beachy (second child), June 11.
Wagler, Angela Bell and Mark, Tavistock, Ont., Taylor Ann (first child), June 25.
Wallace, Tracy and Michael, Newton, Kan., Colby Reid (third child), Sept. 11.
Witmer, Crystal Schwartzentruber and Bevin, Tavistock, Ont., Lauren Danielle (third child), Sept. 14.
Yoder, Debra Lefever and Rodney, Milton, Pa., Madeline Raye (first child), Sept. 6.
Zuercher, Sheila Yoder and Ed, Phoenix, Ariz., Alison Kay (first child), Aug. 21.

PLANNED GIVING

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Mennonite Central Committee 717 859-3889
Mennonite Foundation 800 348-7468

MARRIAGES

Graber-Orjala: Melodie Graber, Corvallis, Ore. (North Main Street), and Jimmy Orjala, Zurich, Switzerland (Finnska Fôrsamlingen), Aug. 10, by Lynn Miller and Cathy Passmore.
Lee-Plato: Jim Lee, Williamsburg, Va. (Williamsburg), and Nicole Plato, Williamsburg, Va. (Williamsburg), Sept. 22, by Ken Brunk.
Peltier-Schaefer: Steve Peltier and Susan Schaefer (Trinity), Sept. 14, by Randy Haarer.
Pfohl-Sutcliffe: Heather Pfohl, St. Jacobs, Ont. (St. Jacobs), and Terrance Sutcliffe, Fergus, Ont., Sept. 7, by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel.
Reimer-Yantzi: John Reimer, Petitcodiac, N.B., and Lorie Yantzi, Petitcodiac, N.B. (East Zorra), June 29, by Glenn Brubacher.
Sommer-Yoder: Mark Sommer, Tremont, Ill. (Morton), and Katrina Yoder, Nappanee, Ind. (North Main Street), Aug. 17, by Ken Bontreger.
Valverde-Weaver: Michael Valverde, Newark, Del. (Akron), and Amy Weaver, New Holland, Pa. (Hopewell), Aug. 24, by Urbane Peachey.

DEATHS

Alderfer, Anna Keller, 90, Sellersville, Pa. Born: July 27, 1906, Pipersville, Pa., to Newberry and Katie Swartz Keller. Died: Sept. 22, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of acute pulmonary edema. Survivors—children: Marion Meyers, Anna Meyers, Evelyn Meyers, A. James; brothers: Norman S. and Howard S. Keller; 22 grandchildren, 50 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Arthur L. Alderfer (husband) and Arlene Histand (daughter). Funeral and burial: Sept. 25, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by David A. Stevens and Truman H. Brunk Jr.
Amstutz, Pauline, 75, Orrville, Ohio. Born: July 10, 1921, Kidron, Ohio, to Gideon and Caroline Amstutz. Died: Sept. 7, 1996, Orrville, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—brother and sister: Willis, Edith. Congregational membership: Chestnut Ridge Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: Sept. 10, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, by Elno Steiner and Richard Ross.
Benner, Edna Lydia Bolton, 75, Hatfield, Pa. Born: Jan. 27, 1921, Hatfield, Pa., to John H. and Lydia Alice Cressman Bolton. Died: Sept. 24, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of a heart attack and stroke. Survivors—children: Mary Jane Chavez, Sally Ann Bauer, Christine Heller, Ella Black, David Christian; brother and sisters: Charles Bolton, Ruth Yoder, Ella Slotter; 13 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Christian C. Benner (husband). Funeral and burial: Sept. 28, Souderton Mennonite Church, by David Greiser and Gerald Clemmer.
Fretz, Lillian G. Ruth, 87, Schwenksville, Pa. Born: Nov. 7, 1908, Franconia Twp., Pa., to Norman G. and Alverda Godshall Ruth. Died: Sept. 21, 1996, Telford, Pa. Survivors—children: Norman R., Peggy Joan Hood; brothers and sisters: Leroy and Merrill Ruth, Helen Landis, Ida Ruth; 3 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Henry M. Fretz (husband). Congregational membership: Franconia Mennonite Church. Funeral: Sept. 25, R. L. Williams Jr., Funeral Home, by John M. Ehst, Steven E. Landis, and Floyd M. Hackman. Burial: Upper Skippack Mennonite Cemetery.
Gingerich, Isaiah, 91, New Hamburg, Ont. Born: Nov. 18, 1904, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Aaron and Susannah Wagler Gingerich. Died: Sept. 15, 1996, New Hamburg, Ont. Survivors—children: Stanley, Catherine Rudy, Margaret Ruby, Mildred Roth, Edith, Stephen; sister: Lavina Gingerich; 13 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Marian Gingerich (wife) and Leighton (infant son). Funeral and burial: Sept. 18, Steinmann Mennonite Church, by Ingrid Loepp Thiessen and Herb Schultz.
Horst, Tilman, 82, Cambridge, Ont. Born: Sept. 21, 1914. Died: Sept. 23, 1996, Cambridge, Ont. Survivors—sons: Mark, Grant; brothers and sisters: Cleason H., Nelson H., Hettie Shoemaker, Selina,

Kenyan bishop ordained. *Nairobi, Kenya (EMM)*—Joseph Kamau (left) translates as Musa Adongo reads the ordination charge to Philip and Jane Okeyo. Philip Okeyo was ordained bishop of the Nairobi Diocese of the Kenya Mennonite Church in a celebration held Aug. 25 at the Nairobi Mennonite Church in Eastleigh.

The ordination service for Okeyo was a bilingual service using English and Swahili. The five-hour service included sermons, choral music, a consecration service, and a time of gift-giving.—*Carol Wert*

Mary Bechtel, Lena Nafziger; 5 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lucinda Snyder Horst (second wife) and Verna Cressman Horst (first wife). Funeral and burial: Sept. 26, Breslau Mennonite Church, by Laurence Martin.

Hostetler, L. Paul, 85, Belleville, Pa. Born: July 6, 1911, Belleville, Pa., to Ezra S. and Katie Yoder Hostetler. Died: Sept. 6, 1996, Lewistown, Pa. Survivors—wife: Katie Yoder Hostetler; children: Paul A., Betty K.; sister: Lena Yoder. Funeral and burial: Sept. 10, Allensville Mennonite Church, by Phil Barr and Paul Bender.

Kapper, Melvin J., 75, Hartville, Ohio. Born: Dec. 20, 1920, Kent, Ohio, to Lewis and Catherine Eberhardt Kapper. Died: Sept. 17, 1996, Akron, Ohio, of leukemia. Survivors—wife: Bernice Hershberger Kapper; children: Charlene Fausnight, Dennis, David; brothers and sisters: Raymond, Marion, LaVern, Alfred, Cyril, Ethel Carr, Catherine Henderhan; 9 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Sept. 20, Beech Mennonite Church, by Wayne Brockway and Melvin Leidig.

Metz, Mamie F., 97, Sellersville, Pa. Born: Oct. 29, 1898, Montgomery County, Pa., to Henry and Catherine Frederick Kulp. Died: Sept. 16, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—daughter: Jean M. Kraybill; 5 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, one step-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Aaron B. Metz (husband). Funeral and burial: Sept. 19, Plains Mennonite Church, by Michael A. Meneses, Wellington K. Alderfer, and Daniel W. Lapp.

Myers, Paul John, 98, Greentown, Ind. Born: Jan. 13, 1898, Miami County, Ind. Died: Aug. 28, 1996, Greentown, Ind., of heart failure. Survivors—children: Dorwin C., Evonna King; brother: Ralph R.; 12 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lona Shrock Myers (wife) and Paul Dale (son). Funeral: Aug. 31, Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, by T. Lee Miller and Floyd Sneary. Burial: Mast Cemetery.

Roth, Druscilla Bender, 86, Tavistock, Ont. Born: Sept. 30, 1909, East Zorra Twp., Ont., to Jacob B. and Magdelina Ramseyer Bender. Died: Aug. 1, 1996, Kitchener, Ont. Survivors—children: Laurene Roth, Nelson Zehr, Catherine Zehr; brother: Clayton Bender; 9 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Noah Roth (third husband), Michael Jutzi (second husband), and William Zehr (first husband). Funeral and burial: Aug. 4, East Zorra Mennonite Church, by Gerald Schwartzentruber and Orland Gingerich.

Sommers, Willis T., 79, Louisville, Ohio. Born: April 24, 1916, Louisville, Ohio, to Harvey and Mary Miller Sommers. Died: Jan. 20, 1996, Louisville, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Alice Miller Sommers; children: Ruth Wenger, Miriam Wion, Paul, Mae Diller, Joyce Nussbaum; brother and sisters: Dean, Goldie Geiser, Ruby Sommers; 18 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: First Mennonite Church of Canton. Funeral and burial: Jan. 23, Beech Mennonite Church, by Daniel Hooley.

Stever, Paul Freeberg, 61, Huntingdon, Pa. Born: July 21, 1935, Huntingdon, Pa., to Joseph and Louise Freeberg Stever. Died: Sept. 9, 1996, State College, Pa. Survivors—wife: Tallulah McEuen Stever; children: Joseph P., Susan N. Ogden, Patricia L. Dills; stepson: John Wright; sister: Joanne Haire; 14 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Paula Ann Stever (daughter) and Skipper Wright (stepson). Memorial service: Sept. 15, Allensville Mennonite Church, by Philip Barr. Cremated.

Tracy, David Columbus, 86, Hagerstown, Md. Born: July 15, 1910, Smithsburg, Md., to Columbus E. and Martha Kline Tracy. Died: Sept. 9, 1996, Hagerstown, Md. Survivors—children: Irene E. Kline, Mary Jane Greathouser, Hazel Bryan; stepchildren: C. O., James, and Leroy Smith; brother: Mark; 27 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Edna E. Tracy (wife). Congregational membership: Community Mennonite Church. Funeral: Sept. 12, Doug Fiery Funeral Home, by Roger Martin and Lewis M. Coss. Burial: Mt. Zion Mennonite Cemetery.

Wells, Herbert Marshall, 69, Newport News, Va. Born: April 23, 1927, White Stocking, N.C., to Vernie F. and Bertie C. Hanchey Wells. Died: Aug. 26, 1996, Newport News, Va., of congestive heart failure and a pulmonary embolism. Survivors—wife: Helena Yoder Wells; sisters: Charlotte Frances, Violet Mae Wells Williams. Funeral and burial: Aug. 29, Warwick River Mennonite Church, by Gordon Zook, Daniel Smucker, and Nelson Burkholder.

Zook, Paul David, 83. Born: Dec. 17, 1912, Sterling, Ohio, to Simon P. and Mary Ann Yoder Zook. Died: Aug. 30, 1996, Orrville, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Leatha Richard Zook; brother and sister: Roy, Mary Esther Schmid. Funeral: Sept. 3, Smithville Mennonite Church, by Glenn Steiner and Richard Ross. Burial: Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Newspaper

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Doing what comes naturally

Clarice Kratz wakes up early these days; she has to be at her job as manager at a new bakery in downtown Waukesha, Wis., at 5 a.m. to make donuts for the breakfast crowd.

Pastors at Maple Avenue Mennonite Church, Clarice and her husband, Lawrence, are helping to start the donut bakery through a coalition of churches. Maple Avenue is a member of the coalition and Lawrence works there as social minister. The county welfare office refers people to Clarice, and she gives them jobs for three months, training them in basic work skills that enable them to get permanent positions. (See story on page 10.)

Meanwhile, the new welfare legislation in the United States cuts $56 billion in federal spending for programs like Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Some states will likely pick up at least some of the slack in providing job training, childcare, and other services required to help people move to self-sufficiency.

But some states won't. That means the number of people living below the poverty line will climb beyond the current 35 million, and the child poverty rate will probably grow as fast as our children do.

That's where people like Clarice and Lawrence Kratz come in—and congregations like Maple Avenue, where numerous members have helped to renovate the donut shop. Actually, they're just doing more of what comes naturally; Maple Avenue has made and sold donuts for church fundraisers for years.

Such a welfare-to-work venture is not an everyday kind of ministry for Mennonite churches; but legislation that could press 1.1 million children into poverty in the United States should hardly be considered "everyday."

In this new U.S. social experiment, Mennonite congregations must seriously consider whether "community food bank" needs to replace "new carpet," and "daycare center" supplant "audiovisual collection" as line items in our church budgets. Are we open to altering these budgets in unprecedented ways? Will we be ready to lop off some of our programs when the woman living in the crumbling yellow house next to the church asks for help in paying for childcare when she's at work, or when the children at our summer day camps show up hungrier in the mornings than ever before? Such times of crisis in a nation call for new priorities in a church that often gets sidetracked from its mission by primping for the cameras.

This day of shriveling government funding will probably force us to work ecumenically in ways we haven't before. The Kratzes' dream of opening a donut bakery to help people from welfare to work wouldn't have been possible without the Waukesha coalition of churches.

We will also probably be forced out of steely partisan commitments that track the cause of poverty to oppressive inequalities or the lack of motivation or morality. These discussions must continue, for out of such grow both attempts at necessary structural change and work at helping individuals transform their lives. But debate about the best way to help the poor must occur in the very middle of our reflective and compassionate action on behalf of them. In this era of "monumental callousness" (to quote one *Newsweek* writer), there is room enough for all of our passions and theories and dreams and talents—even for donut making.

Models of such simple action were the citizens of Le Chambon, a small Protestant town in southern France that sheltered Jewish people during World War II. Seeing need firsthand may help us respond like Magda Trocmé in that village, who, when the first refugee fleeing from the Nazis came to her door, said, "Naturally, come in, and come in."

What began with no-hesitation hospitality turned into a complex plan of resistance that rescued literally thousands of people in an era of madness.

Our situations are usually not so crisis-filled, but hopefully our heady arguments have not taken us so far from our hearts that we don't respond with such spontaneity. Whether our actions as congregations or individuals center on after-school programs or job training or prayer vigils or food banks or lobbying state and federal governments or donut shops—the new U.S. welfare legislation makes it both a possibility and a necessity for us to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. Naturally.—*vsw*

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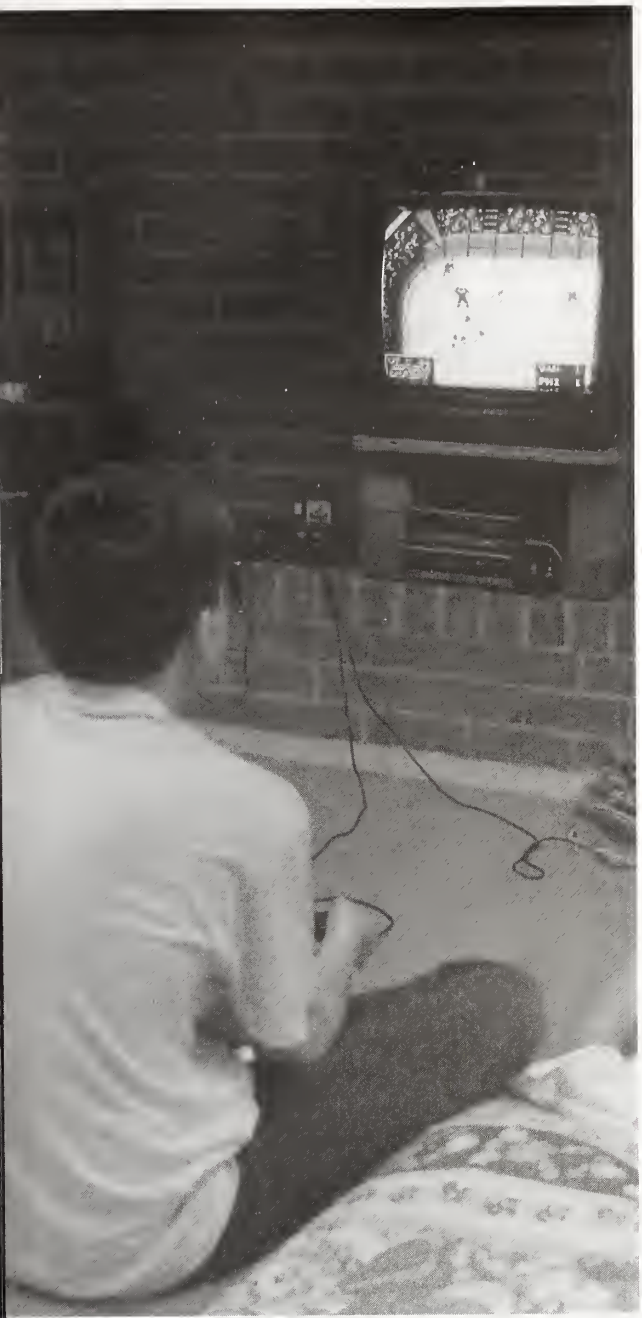
October 15, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



The challenges of the electronic media are not those of content—wholesomeness, violence, commercialism, and sex. They are issues of attention and reality.

What's the real issue with TV and computers?

The big deal with electronic mediation is precisely this—we think very little about it. And yet electronic information technology is changing us in dramatic ways.

by Ron Helmuth

If you are like most Americans, you spend between 50 and 95 percent of your waking hours listening to the radio or recorded music, watching television, or working on the computer. Today you may have awakened to a clock radio, listened to the news while dressing, watched a morning news show while eating breakfast, listened to the radio while commuting, heard music over the loudspeaker in the office, worked part of the day on the computer, and spent several hours in the evening either watching television or logged on to the Internet.

In all these cases, you were electronically mediated. Some electronic device was mediating your experience—a radio, stereo, television, or computer.

Now all experience is mediated in some way, whether by sight, sound, or other senses. So what's the big deal about electronic mediation? Precisely this: We think very little about electronic mediation as a phenomenon, yet electronic information technology, like any technology that we use heavily, is dramatically changing us.

It was not always so for Mennonites. If you

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Marilyn Kennel:
Quit being so nice! 5

Concluding the series,
My vision for the Mennonite church (8):
The place to end is with Jesus 6

MCC workers join Christians in West Bank in prayers for peace . . 8

Goshen College students flock to religion and philosophy classes 9

What we pay attention to for so much of our time powerfully determines who we are. We must understand what electronic media does and intentionally engage it.

came of age in the sixties or seventies as I did, you likely grappled with the electronic media in an intense and emotional way. Some church leaders preached against TV and even radio, arguing that they were evil and worldly and had no place in Christian homes.

Many of us learned otherwise. At the homes of our neighborhood playmates, we watched "The Brady Bunch," "I Love Lucy," "Red Skelton," ball games, news, and special events like Kennedy's funeral and the first moon walk. We found some programs solid and informative. Even the entertainment seemed good and wholesome, cute rather than evil. The stories often contained morals and values that we shared.

The people preaching against TV and radio were just plain wrong, many of us concluded. They were unsophisticated and reactionary, with their heads in the sand. Having thus made peace, we began our love affair with the electronic media.

Today, our lives are heavily mediated electronically. If we are concerned about these media, it is not about our heavy use; rather, it's about content and how to combat violence, drugs, commercialism, and sex in the media. These may be worthy issues, but we must ask the more fundamental question about media engagement itself.

What does it mean that so much of our lives is electronically mediated? How are we being changed by these electronic media—audio, video, and computers? Should we be concerned? Do they pose dangers to us and future generations?

Most people have strong opinions about these complex and emotional questions. Some are scandalized that anyone would question engaging the electronic media, particularly computers and the Internet. More information can only be better, they think, and to question that is hopelessly backward.

Others are just as scandalized by these media and are sure that somehow society's breakdown is a result of them. As a result of these polarized opinions, discussions about the media are often shrill and not very satisfying.

I believe we must reflect on the electronic media and change how we engage them; I am not, however, calling for their total rejection. Television and radio are here to stay, as are stereos and computers. We should try to understand them and use them for good.

Some have likened the change brought by the electronic media as the natural and not unwelcome end of the Gutenburg or print era. Electronic media is replacing an earlier technology (print), just as Gutenburg's printing press ended the dark ages in the 15th century by making books widely available, or just as

the phonetic alphabet two millennia earlier replaced the oral age. A natural conclusion to this argument is that these changes are neither good nor bad. After all, technology is morally neutral; superior technologies naturally prevail.

Such a conclusion is shortsighted. What we pay attention to for so much of our time powerfully determines what we are. We should understand what electronic media does to and for us and be intentional about how we engage it.

So what happens when we are electronically mediated? How does the quality of electronically mediated experience compare to direct experience?

Electronic mediation powerfully separates us from what is real. This separation occurs because electronically mediated experiences contain but a small fraction of the actual experience. For instance, a nature show presents a two-dimensional image that incorporates a narrow spectrum of colors and range of sound. Not presented are sensations of wind, temperature, scent, and bodily exertion, nor the richness or nuances of color and sound. Likewise, a musical recording presents only sound. All other aspects of musical performance are ignored—the unplanned interaction of the musicians with audience, the music, and each other.

Electronically delivered experience wreaks havoc with our attention. Often we fragment our attention by giving the electronic message a portion of our attention. For instance, when do we ever totally concentrate on the radio? When we do give the media our full attention—as an hour of watching television shows us—we feel drugged into lethargy rather than alert and exhilarated as we should after a time of mental exercise.

Electronically presented information does not lend itself to careful analysis and contemplation, especially in comparison to printed information. With television or radio, one is at the mercy of the program's pace. One must pay close attention to keep up, without opportunity to pause, reflect, or look up related information that gives context. This is why television is so harmful to children: a child's pace of learning is at odds with television's pace of presentation.

Electronic mediation replaces other important human activity. When electronic information devices are engaged, human activities are suspended or at best diluted. The radio intrudes on our private life of meditation and contemplation. Our direct participation in music by playing and singing has been drastically reduced by radios and stereos. Two generations ago, children filled sandlot baseball diamonds; now many stay indoors watching TV or playing electronic baseball games. Family life across our nation is suspended each night by television.

We cannot deny that the information and experience mediated electronically are often useful, interesting, astounding, and entertaining. But at the same time, they also remove us from reality, cloud our attention and contemplation, and replace important human activities.

Electronically delivered audio and video are decades old. The much newer and less understood electronic medium is the computer, which combined with the Internet has captured our attention as a force that will dramatically change society.

How are Christians to understand computers and the Internet? Are they the beginning of an information superhighway that vastly increases available information, or are they a dangerous and sleazy flea market of bad language and pornography?

I would not want to be without my computer or the Internet. I would hate to write this article without my computer. And though I sometimes lose patience with the Internet, I find it quite useful. For example, I eagerly await a weekly newsletter about the social implications of technology, delivered via e-mail.

To understand computers, one must recognize that they are multimedia machines. They incorporate all the other electronic media and add many other functions. Each of these functions should be considered as a separate medium.

A computer, for example, can manage inventory, post accounting transactions, and run payroll for a business. It's not very useful to see these activities as "electronically mediated experience." But the same computer can be a post office, telephone, virtual meeting place for conversation, music box, TV, and fancy game machine. In these cases the computer definitely mediates our experience.

The Amish understand this multimedia character of computers. They firmly reject technologies that would threaten their lifestyle, yet many use computers to run their businesses, correctly seeing them as sophisticated filing cabinets and ledger sheets that are necessary for efficiency.

If we do not consciously respond to this age of electronic media, it is clear what will happen. We will not turn off our radios, televisions,

For every time we use the TV or the computer, let us ask: "Should I engage? Am I being diverted from some more important activity? Is there a better alternative?"

stereos, and computers, for these media themselves clamor very effectively for our attention by promising information, entertainment, education, and inspiration. And they largely deliver on their promises.

We will only limit our electronic engagement if we understand that the true cost of electronic experience and information is the attention we must pay to them. This attention is most precious, and spending it on electronic media often means that we neglect to do the things that give us purpose and satisfaction.

We could begin by responding in three ways: ***Let us intentionally disengage, at least partially.*** We can allow ourselves blocks of time in which we are not electronically engaged. We can allow for the timeless human activities of meditation, contemplation, intimacy, fellowship, and play that the pressures of modern life and continual electronic mediation divert us from—activities that can bring us purpose and happiness.

Let us engage these media intentionally rather than automatically. For every electronic engagement, every time we flip on the switch, let us ask, "Should I engage? Am I being diverted from other more important and satisfying activities? What does this engagement cost me? Is there a better alternative?"

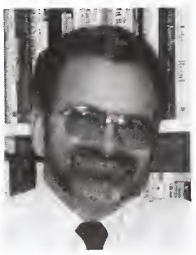
Let us reevaluate the role of television in our lives. To quote a young friend of mine, is television turning your living room into a viewing room (an apt though unintended reference to a funeral parlor)? Should we get our news, politics, nature, entertainment, family time, religion, athletics, or our children's education from television? Television itself promises to deliver all of these and advocates our participation. In so doing it exacts a terrible price—our attention. Are we willing to pay?

The challenges of the electronic media are not those of content—violence, commercialism, and sex. They are issues of attention and reality—attention because our attention defines us, and reality because electronically mediated experience threatens to remove, replace, and dilute real and direct experience.

Ron Helmuth, Harrisonburg, Va., has directed the information systems department at Eastern Mennonite University since 1994. He is also currently responsible for computerizing the EMU campus. Prior to 1994, he was an employee of IBM.

O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name. . . . The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth.
—Isaiah 25:1a, 8, NRSV

Gospel Herald



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Quit being so nice!

by Marilyn Kennel

"Be nice," my mother pleaded when I squabbled with the neighborhood children many years ago. "But, Mom, they don't play fair," I protested. "You can still be nice," she insisted.

"Be nice," I muttered to myself when an ambitious supervisor took sole credit for my idea. "Be nice." Swallowing my anger and disappointment, I tried to convince myself it didn't matter.

"Be nice," I told my own children each time they came to me, crying their hurt and frustration because of another's actions. "I know they aren't being nice to you. Yes, I know you are right. Yes, I know it isn't fair. But you can still be nice!"

• • •

For four decades, this philosophy topped my code of behavior. Niceness . . . it's synonymous with Godliness and peacemaking . . . isn't it?

Nice keeps the waters calm, the feathers smooth, the countenances sweet. It puts on a pretty face and reassures anyone who might be watching that all is well. It allows every situation, whether good or bad, to unfold undisturbed and unchallenged. Nice supports the status quo.

And sometimes, nice is a lie.

It covers up the truth, it denies pain, it ignores injustice, it excuses nasty behavior, it trivializes suffering.

Nice lets the bullies among us off the hook and stifles any voice raised in protest. Nice bypasses the struggle necessary to effect lasting peace. Nice settles for an uneasy and temporary calm.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace, "God with us," was not always nice. Though he longed to help the Hebrew people, to gather them into the kingdom, they would not let him. So he exposed the religious leaders who were spiritual phonies. "These people honor me with their lips," Jesus said, "but their hearts are far from me" (Matt. 15:8).

As he proclaimed the kingdom of God, Jesus modeled a new and radical social order in which all people had equal dignity and worth. He challenged the assumptions of class and privilege held by his followers. "Let the children come," he rebuked the disciples when they tried to keep them and their mothers away. "The kingdom belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:13-14).

When the disciples fussed about position and pecking order, Jesus chided them again, denouncing inappropriate aspirations to power. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant" (Matt. 20:25-26).

Jesus continues to turn the world upside down. He pierces my display of goodness to reveal the shadows in my hidden attitudes of self-righteousness, bias, and secret longings for status and influence. He challenges me to acknowledge that being nice is sometimes a handy front for inaction rooted in fear. He invites me to name the fears that bind me, the fears that keep me from speaking out for peace, justice, and equality: fears of reputation lost, of credibility questioned. Fears of being misunderstood, labeled, mocked, maligned, rejected.

Jesus nudges me to form new patterns of response, to raise my voice, to take some risks. Ancient words from the prophet Micah echo through the centuries and resound in the stillness of my heart. "He has told you . . . what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Humble acts of resistance do make a different. In Montgomery, Ala., on Dec. 1, 1955, Rosa Parks quietly but determinedly refused to yield her bus seat to a white passenger. Her arrest and the subsequent public outcry led to a year-long bus boycott and the enactment of significant civil rights legislation. That action is considered to be the spark that ignited the civil rights movement.

The journey to peace, individually and as a society, advances one step at a time. Whenever, in the face of injustice or conflict, we choose to intervene rather than to ignore, to speak out rather than to keep silent, to join others in protest rather than to stand on the sidelines, then and only then will we move toward our goal of peace in this world.

• • •

"Be nice," my husband reminded me recently as I headed out the door for a potentially difficult meeting. "Being nice won't get us anywhere," I protested.

"Be nice," he repeated. "I don't have to be nice. I have nothing to lose," I insisted.

"Be Christlike," he said, a twinkle in his eye. "That's more like it!" I left the house with peace in my heart.

Marilyn Kennel, Mount Joy, Pa., is an adult Sunday school teacher and song leader at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church. This article won first place in the 1995 Lancaster County Peace Essay Contest.

My vision for the Mennonite church (8):

The place to end is

Concluding a series on where the Mennonite church could be headed and how it is that we get there.

by Janice Yordy-Sutter

About six years ago, our congregation developed a list of 15 vision statements to guide us as we approach the 2lst century. One of the statements reads, "By the grace and to the glory of God, in the year 2000, we will be a congregation that explores new ideas and leads society in change consistent with God's purpose."

This particular statement sometimes brings chuckles when we review our vision in newcomers' classes, especially among those who have been raised in the Mennonite church. "The Mennonite Church . . . lead society in change? Aren't we the ones who are always 20 years behind?"

In the name of Jesus Christ, it's time for us to shed this image of ourselves, in our minds and in the minds of others. God is busy doing a new thing in our world. We need to be attentive to God's new ideas and the ways they will transform society as they are embodied in the lives of God's people.

My vision for the Mennonite church is that we will be so empowered by our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and so supported in our congregational life that we will be willing and able to take the risks to lead society in change consistent with God's purpose.

It's happened before. Some of our early Anabaptist brothers and sisters had such confident faith in Christ that they took great risks in presenting their society with radically different ideas about baptism, the separation of church and state, and nonresistant love. In more recent years, God has also used our church to bring about change in areas such as conflict resolution and mediation, alternative service, and worldwide relief and development.

In the next 10 years, our society will continue to need the healing and hope that disciples of Jesus Christ can offer. Our health care, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems need healing and hope. As the wealth of the world accumulates in the hands of fewer people, as more of the middle class overextend themselves financially through credit, and as our poor find it more difficult to break out of poverty even with full-time jobs, our economic systems will certainly need healing and hope as well.

Our society is crying out for some radical new ideas for ways to build neighborhoods and reduce violence. Healing and hope are needed in our welfare systems and our responses to the poor, the homeless, and those without jobs. What radical new ideas can offer healing and hope to our society's broken family systems?

My vision for the Mennonite church is not just about coming up with creative solutions to society's problems; it is first and foremost about being grounded in our personal and congregational relationships with Jesus Christ. It's about being more spontaneous in responding to the movement of the Holy Spirit. This must be the driving force behind our efforts to lead society in change and to offer healing and hope.

I'm not talking about a passive, never-talk-about-it allegiance to Christ. My vision for us as the Mennonite church is that we be empowered and confident risk takers because of the love and grace we experience daily through the risen Lord. This power will lead society in change consistent with God's purpose.

Janice Yordy Sutter is one of three pastors at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind. With her husband, Dave, she talks in various churches about vision for the church.

by John Drescher

My vision and prayer for the Mennonite church is a great spiritual awakening. I say this out of preaching approximately 200 messages a year across North America for the past three years, out of visiting at least six other countries where there are first-generation churches, and out of studying the great spiritual awakenings in the past—how they began and the profound ethical, moral, and spiritual effects they had upon the church and society.

We need a spiritual awakening which will

with Jesus

lead to "worship in the Spirit" (Phil. 3:3). Since all God has for us is made real through the Holy Spirit, we need a work of the Spirit which will magnify Christ and his Word; give the liberty of the Spirit in confession, repentance, forgiveness, prayer, worship, and witness; and move us beyond the Sunday service to the family and the workplace.

We need a spiritual awakening which will lead us to make our "boast in Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:3). This is difficult for a second-, third-, or fourth-generation church. We love to laud our past instead of lifting up Jesus Christ. It becomes difficult to declare honestly, "God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ." We begin to imagine we are faithful because those in the past were faithful.

Unless Christ is at the center of our vision, we cannot call persons to salvation or discipleship. We need to have a spiritual awakening which will glory only in Jesus Christ and leave all ancestral worship and denominational pride behind.

We need a spiritual awakening which will put "no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). This also is difficult for a church with a history. Here the temptation is to think that the church can be built by our own effort, organizational skill, intellect, education, financial strategy, or personal goodness. As long as there are any inklings of any of these, we get only what human effort can give and only what can be easily explained in natural terms.

I pray daily for the kind of spiritual awakening which will eradicate fleshly confidence at every level; which will place life on the plane of God's grace, mercy, and love; and which will lead to true repentance and obedience to Christ.

Only with a spiritual awakening will we pray as we ought, will we worship in Spirit and in truth, will we give freely and joyfully of our material possessions, will our marriages and families be saved, and will we serve and witness with power every place we move.

Such an awakening will begin, as awakenings always do, in a movement of prayer. Everywhere I've gone, I have found a nucleus, a faithful remnant, longing and praying for such an awakening. Surely God will answer these servants who cry night and day.

John M. Drescher is a Mennonite minister and speaker who lives in Harrisonburg, Va. He served as editor of Gospel Herald *from 1963-73.*

by H. Howard Witmer

Ten years from now the Mennonite church will be struggling with its identity. It will be made up of believers from diverse social, ethical, and cultural backgrounds. Our people will be involved in the mainstream of business and social activity. Church members will be faced with a high-tech world in which maintaining the traditional simple life is difficult. New philosophies, ideologies, and theologies will challenge the church.

Ten years from now, I would like to see the Mennonite church be a viable church with a unique message. I believe such a church will have the following characteristics:

- It will be firmly rooted in Jesus Christ. Such a church will confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16).
- It will take seriously the mandate of Jesus to share the good news of salvation and will call individuals to faith in Jesus Christ for personal forgiveness and cleansing from sin.
- It will continue to listen to Jesus as God commanded: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" (Mark 9:7). Such a church will hear the words of Jesus and put them into practice, building on the Rock.
- It will look seriously at the word by those who heard Jesus, the apostles and prophets.
- It will call people to faithful stewardship of all the technological, scientific, and financial elements that thrust themselves upon society. Such a church will not let the systems of society squeeze it into their mold but will bring everything under the rule of Christ.
- It will consistently invite and be sensitive to the wind of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit takes the words of Jesus and leads the church into truth.
- It will insist that pastors, teachers, and administrators give evidence of a personal commitment to the rule of Jesus Christ in their lives and are committed to the principles he taught. Such a church will place spiritual commitment and noble character high on its list of priorities for its leaders.

H. Howard Witmer, Manheim, Pa., is a bishop in the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference and serves as overseer of the Williamson-Milton District. He and his wife, Miriam, are members of the Erisman Mennonite Church.

Moving toward 'peace based on justice':

MCC workers join Christians in West Bank to pray for peace

East Jerusalem, West Bank (MCC)—"For the past few days we have been going through the way of the cross," opens the statement read by Christians here who gathered for prayer in response to the violent clashes between Israeli military and Palestinian police and civilians in the West Bank.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteers in Jerusalem were among the 800 local Christians who prayed and sang together, lit candles, and walked silently along the Via Dolorosa on Sept. 29. The prayer service was held in response to three days of violence, the worst in decades, that erupted following the controversial decision by Israeli officials to open an archaeological tunnel located in the Old City of Jerusalem.

In response to the crisis, local patriarchs from the Latin Catholic, Orthodox, and Armenian churches, along with bishops and pastors from Anglican and Protestant congregations, issued a statement and gathered local Christians for prayer at St. Anne's Church in the Old City of Jerusalem.

• • •

Meanwhile, 6,000 Christian Zionists from around the world gathered in West Jerusalem for annual meetings hosted by the Christian Embassy. They cheered Benjamin Netanyahu as he spoke to them about Israel's claims to absolute sovereignty in the city.

Recognizing that the recent tunnel opening that sparked the clashes was only "the straw that broke the camel's back," the statement issued by local Christians addresses the Palestinians' longstanding grievances. The church leaders called on the Israeli government to return land confiscated from Palestinians, to remove roadblocks that effectively close Jerusalem to West Bank Palestinians for worship and commerce, and to fulfill all aspects of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords.

Demonstrations opposing the opening of the tunnel turned violent as Israeli Defense Force soldiers and Palestinian police and civilians opened fire. Bethlehem Bible College, an MCC-supported institution, was caught in the cross fire last Thursday. Bishara Awad, president of the college, said, "It was like a battle on the street in front of the Bible College—gunshots firing in every direction. One shot came through the window of the library of the Bible College. It was a miracle that no one inside was hurt."

• • •

Three Palestinians were killed in the clashes in Bethlehem, and dozens were wounded. Zoughbi Zoughbi, director of an MCC-supported conflict resolution center in Bethlehem, used his vehicle to transport wounded to the hospital. Parts of Bethlehem were without electricity after gunfire damaged one of the main generators.

MCC partners in the West Bank are concerned about shortages of medical supplies and food. "This is a siege," Zoughbi says. "There is a shortage of medicine and food, especially milk, fresh fruits, and vegetables. Rice is low in supply. Petroleum is already limited for use by ambulances and security vehicles only. The fear of the people is growing."

Zoughbi voiced his concern that the summit held in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 1 would only bring "cosmetic" change. "We need fundamental change. We hope that what has happened will move Israelis and Palestinians in the direction of peace based on justice."

—*Carmen Pauls*

'The guns seemed to be wearing the men':

Peacemaker team members encounter unrest

Elayne McClanon of Carlisle, Pa., is on an assignment with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in Hebron. CPT is a program of Mennonite, Church of the Brethren, and Quaker groups. McClanon writes of her experiences during a curfew in Hebron that was lifted on Oct. 6. According to a CPT release, internal closure of the West Bank makes travel and transportation of goods difficult. The unemployment rate in the West Bank since the closure began on Sept. 26 has jumped from 24 percent to 55 percent.—Editor

Hebron, West Bank (CPT)—With Hebron under curfew, folks can only go out on the streets from 5 to 9 a.m. They scurry around trying to find essentials before a speaker in a jeep announces, "Everyone to their house." At that point, patrols of eight armed soldiers appear to check IDs and stop any cars remaining on the street.

On Sept. 30, the Christian Peacemaker Team was threatened with arrest if we violated curfew. Palestinian and Israeli contacts advised us to obey the curfew for now, except in cases of emergency. They felt that our presence could be crucial in the coming days.

On Oct. 3 at 6:15 a.m., we held our worship as usual—on a stone bench in a small park overlooking the modular police station and the Cave of the Patriarchs, where it is believed Abraham and Sarah are buried. As we were intent on worship, a "click, click" sound caused me to raise my eyes. Six soldiers cocked their rifles, rushed forward, and pointed their guns at us. Everyone paused, and then they left and we finished praying.

We walked on through town and three young soldiers stepped out in front of us. We thought they wanted to check our passports, but one said, "May I ask you something? What do you do here?"

We explained that we represent the peace churches of the U.S. and Canada and that we're here to report on the situation and to propose nonviolence as a way to solve problems. As we talked, we noticed their M-16s slung in front of them—the guns seemed to be wearing the men. We told them we came voluntarily, and that many people supported our journey and the work of the team.

One soldier said, "Well, you have to be realistic; it's just reality here." We suggested envisioning another reality in which problems are solved in a nonviolent way. He nodded, but another said, "I still don't understand it."

I told him that I have three beautiful sons, much like them, and that it grieves me to see that a system can turn fine young men into soldiers and make them comfortable carrying and using guns.—*Elayne McClanon*

Korean food shortage. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—North Koreans wait in line to receive food because of a severe food shortage in that country. "North Korea's food shortage is more severe than Ethiopia's was in the early 1980s," says Al Kehler, program coordinator of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, of which Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada is a member. Kehler, who recently returned from a trip to North Korea, said that the shortage is spread throughout the North Korean population. People are struggling to cope by "dividing up the shortages," says Kehler, and he warns by next year the situation will be "very bad." Poor economic planning by the government and several natural disasters have contributed to the country's food shortage, estimated at one million tons.

MCC contributed $336,100 (U.S.) to Canadian Foodgrains Bank to send nearly 4.4 million metric tons of rice that arrived in North Korea this summer. MCC has also sent canned meat to a North Korean Christian group in conjunction with the Church of the Brethren.—*Pearl Sensenig*

Mennonites in Argentina protest the sale of arms

Buenos Aires, Argentina (MWC)—The Evangelical Mennonite Church has begun a campaign against a proposed action of the United States Congress to lift the prohibition on the sale of arms to Latin America, according to declarations made by Raul Garcia, president of Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

Garcia, who made the pronouncement on an Argentinean radio program, said that "it would be regrettable to lift the prohibition on selling sophisticated war elements to the Southern Cone countries, since it would be a way of promoting the arming of these countries instead of using funds as instruments of peace, such as for health and education and encouraging the resolution of any differences in these countries through dialogue."

Garcia, pastor of a Mennonite church in Pehuajo, stated that behind this action "could be, in some form, the lack of jobs in the United States, but our interest above all is to reach conciliation in the Southern Cone, even though making weapons could signify for them a source of jobs."

MWC sent a letter to U.S. president Bill Clinton, signed by Garcia as president of MWC, that expressed concern over possibly eliminating the prohibition on the sale of arms to countries in Latin America.

College students flock to Bible, religion majors

Goshen, Ind. (GC)—Goshen (Ind.) College is reporting an increase in Bible, religion, and philosophy majors.

During the 1993-94 and 1994-95 school years, the combined number of major and minors at GC was around 20. Last year's numbers and this year's projected numbers hover near 40.

GC is just one of many colleges around the U.S. with an increase in religious studies majors. In a 1995 study of 251 colleges, the Association of the Chairs of the Departments of Religion found a 36 percent rise of undergraduate religion majors over a five-year period.

Religion has become a big part of American culture, says Keith Graber Miller, assistant professor of Bible, religion, and philosophy. "You do see religion a fair amount in the news." He cites news on cults, fundamentalists, abortion, and homosexuality as examples.

The professors in the GC Bible, religion, and philosophy department say the increase is due in part to interest in a wide range of ideas. Enrollment for classes in philosophy, Asian religions, ethics, and liberation theology have had recent increases partly because of "more of an acceptance of a wider circle of beliefs," according to Don Blosser, chair of the department.

Blosser says, however, that an interest in other religions and cultures doesn't equal an abandonment of Christianity. "That does not mean these people are less committed to the Christian faith," he says. "It's just that their world is bigger."

Differences in religious beliefs is a source of tension, says Jo-Ann Brant, who teaches the class "Asian Religions." By studying another religion, students in her class can better understand where people with different religious beliefs are coming from. "They are not on a shopping trip to find a religion that fits," she says. "Their concern is to respect others, not to exploit others."

Interest in other ways of thinking is evident in increased enrollment in Brant's "Introduction to Philosophy" course. "I do think that there is a trend on campus to return to the traditional questions of philosophy," says Brant.

Graber Miller says although times have changed and many philosophies exist, "students continue to have an interest in authentic, meaningful faith."—*Matthew Smith*

Voluntary Service workers march against death penalty in Virginia

Richmond, Va. (MBM)—"Hey-hey! Ho-ho! The death penalty has got to go!" chanted 250 death penalty opponents, including 15 Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) Voluntary Service workers from Richmond and Washington, D.C., as they marched here on Sept. 22.

The rally was organized by two groups: Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty and Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation (MVFR). Each encourages the voting public to demand alternatives to government-sponsored executions of criminals.

'We the people.' "It isn't the execution team that's doing the killing. . . it's 'we the people,' " said Ann Coleman, an MVFR member whose daughter was shot to death in Los Angeles eleven years ago. Her youngest son, out of grief and rage over the murder of his sister, subsequently took his own life.

"I do not condone murder," Coleman said. "I'm just saying that I do not want to be a part of asking the state to kill in my name." Although her daughter's murder was never solved, she has declared that, if it ever is, she will do anything in her power to prevent the killer's execution. "To say that we can't do anything worse to a person than to kill them is to admit we failed," she said.

Loving unconditionally. According to statistics quoted by several members of MVFR, the United States is one of only five countries that executes juveniles. The United States is also the only remaining Western country that uses the death penalty as punishment for crimes.

When Canada abolished the death penalty in 1976, the homicide rate decreased by one-third in that country, said Mark Staut, U.S. coordinator for Amnesty International's death penalty division. "We could prevent over 50 percent of the murders represented on death row today," Staut said. "But this will only happen if we take the resources we are using to put people to death and put them into prevention programs that are proven to work."

After the rally and march, Sister Helen Prejean, author of the book-turned-film *Dead Man Walking*, spoke to a standing-room-only crowd at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond. Prejean spoke to an estimated 1,500 people for nearly two hours.

"I was really impressed by her," Washington VSer Karen Hertzler said. "She really challenged me to think hard about trying to love everyone unconditionally."—*Christy Risser*

MWC sets new deadline as 3,000 register for India

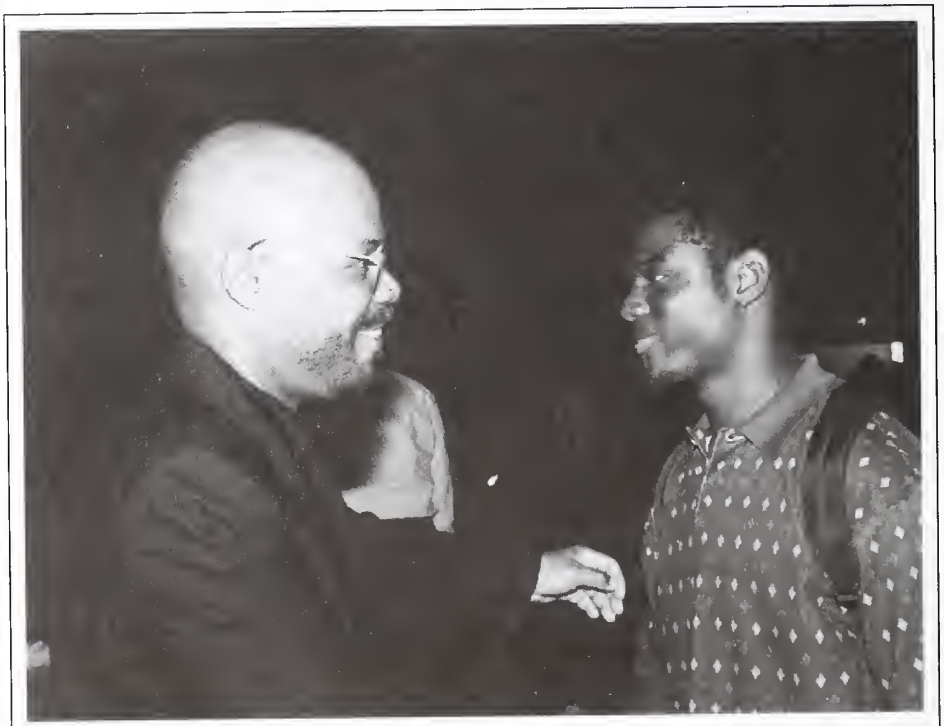
Strasbourg, France (MWC)—Over 3,000 people have registered so far for India 1997, the next Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly.

According to a Sept. 20 tally, 3,326 people had registered for the Assembly, including 2,125 from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in India. To date, 1,201 have registered from outside of India, including 142 people from other Asian countries, 54 from Africa, 67 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 159 from Europe, 564 from the United States, and 215 from Canada.

Larry Miller, MWC executive secretary, says he is pleased with the numbers. "About two-thirds of registrants are from the younger churches in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. This is an accurate reflection of MWC's total membership."

Since Calcutta hotel space and flights to India are filling up quickly, MWC and Mennonite Travel Service have announced that Nov. 1 is the deadline for new registrations.

—*Marcus Shantz*



Go with the flow. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—Michael Banks (left) greets Ben Stevens, a third-year student at Eastern Mennonite University. Michael and Addie Banks, a veteran urban ministry couple, were speakers for the fall spiritual life weekend held here Sept. 20-22. Michael Banks based his messages on Ezekiel and invited the audience to "enter the flow with God. . . to participate in the mighty stream of God in history." Banks added, "Some here will only stick your big toe in the transforming water [this weekend], some will wade into the stream, while others will allow [the Spirit of God] to completely immerse you."

Michael and Addie Banks have pastored the King of Glory Tabernacle, a Mennonite congregation in the Bronx, N.Y., for the last 15 years.

In addition to five worship and teaching sessions over the weekend, workshops led by EMU faculty and community leaders were held Saturday afternoon.

—*Jim Bishop*

Instability threatens Haitian people. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—A Haitian man and his son extract juice from raw sugar cane to be used to sweeten the family's coffee. Although official news is hard to come by, even for those living in Haiti, one doesn't have to keep one's ear too close to the ground to know Haiti has lurched back into instability, says Dan Wiens, who co-directs Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) programs in this Caribbean country. In the last couple of weeks, Haitian military forces have begun reasserting themselves. So far this time, peasant groups are not being cowed. Some say there's not a machete left unsold in Port-au-Prince stores, Wiens says, even though if it came to armed violence, machetes would be a poor match for ex-soldiers' weapons.

Sixteen adults and seven children are in Haiti with MCC. Of these, the five adults and four children in Port-au-Prince are taking extra caution in the city. To date the MCC workers in the countryside are little affected by the recent events.

Although Jean-Bertrand Aristide declared the military abolished during his brief return to the presidency (October 1994-February 1996), the act was never legalized. Military officials do not report to work in the morning and have no formal role in the government, but they have evidently kept themselves loosely organized even while in hiding, Wiens says.

Haiti's new police unit, which is being trained by United Nations forces, is evidently frightened enough of the military's resurgence that police officers are not reporting to police stations around the country.

MCC U.S. executive committee considers decentralizing; approves service unit

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—"Strategic planning on the run" is how Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) executive director Ronald J. R. Mathies described the MCC U.S. executive committee meetings held here, Sept. 13-14. This is not new, Mathies recalled. MCC has done strategic planning on the run in the past, he said, adding that it fits "the tenor of the times."

At these meetings, the regional offices —particularly MCC East Coast— raised the possibility of shifting more programs from national to regional offices. The suggestion grew from concerns that MCC U.S. projects are too removed from its constituents.

More cost or more involvement? The discussion was complicated by several unknowns, including a mission statement under review, talk of moving MCC U.S. headquarters to an urban area, and the current search for a new MCC U.S. executive director.

Lynn Roth, MCC East Coast director, admitted that moving more programs to local offices could mean more administrative costs. He added, however, that decentralizing could also mean more direct involvement of constituents in MCC's work.

Kathi Oswald, committee member from Fresno, Calif., said, "We can do [local] mission better from Reedley than from Akron, not because we are wiser, but because we are closer."

But Community Ministries director James Logan told the committee that proximity does not equal awareness. "Jeannie Romero and I [as persons of color] know more of the service workers' experience in Los Angeles than most of the West Coast board knows." In the United States, bonds are forged more by sharing a common culture, history, tradition, and "way of knowing" than by geographic proximity. Anglos need to understand that, Logan explained later.

The issue of race also surfaced repeatedly in the discussion of decentralization. Committee member Wilma Bailey of Grantham, Pa., suggested decentralization may mean strong programs like the current racism awareness project could fall by the wayside if regional MCC offices take more of MCC U.S. resources for local projects.

Committee member Lawrence Hart of Clinton, Okla., said the decentralization discussion was getting ahead of the game and urged the committee to first review and revise its mission statement.

The committee approved the opening of a new service unit in Philadelphia, Pa. The unit is intended to foster more minority participation than traditional service units. Criteria for the location included the number of non-Anglo Mennonite congregations in the urban area and amount of cultural diversity within and among those congregations.

Falling income. Ken Langeman, MCC comptroller, reported that although U.S. contributions have kept pace with inflation, income from other sources has fallen and may continue to fall. "Is the machinery we have to operate MCC on three levels too big for the resources we have?" Langeman asked. He said the three-level (regional, national, and binational) structure of MCC grew out of an era when resources were increasing.

The report of declining income led to questions about fundraising. Langeman said MCC has gone from spending almost none of its annual budget to almost 2 percent of its $37 million budget on fundraising over the last six years.

Dwight McFadden, director of personnel services, told the committee about a 24 percent drop in year-to-date applications over the past two years. "It is a concern, and some would call it a crisis," he said. He did not explain the drop but suggested two reasons: applicants are one additional generation removed from the institution's founding and MCC has stopped recruiting on non-Mennonite campuses.—*Larry Penner*

• **Peace Factory tour extended.** The Peace and Justice Committee of the Mennonite Church, in fall meetings in Elkhart, Ind., decided to extend the Peace Factory tour for six more months into the middle of 1998. The committee will also host a Peace Committee Consultation July 26-28, 1997, in Orlando, Fla., directly before the Mennonite Church General Assembly.

• **Mission ventures begun.** Zaire Mennonite conferences have begun humanitarian assistance and church planting in eastern Zaire in response to the outbreak of ethnic conflicts in Rwanda in 1994. The three Mennonite conferences in Zaire had previously concentrated most of their outreach efforts in Kinshasa, Bandundu, and Kasai provinces. In this new effort, the Zairian conferences are working with their North American partners—Mennonite Brethren Missions / Services, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, and Mennonite Central Committee.

• **Proposals invited.** Eastern Mennonite University is inviting researchers to apply for the third annual Harry A. Brunk Scholars Award. The $2,000 scholarship is awarded annually to a person who intends to complete research drawing heavily on the resources of the Menno Simons Historical Library and Archives. The application deadline is Feb. 1, 1997. Applications are available from 540 432-4169.

• **Hesston balances budget.** Hesston (Kan.) College closed its 1995-96 fiscal year with a balanced budget for the fifth consecutive year, reports director of finance Nelson Kilmer. Revenues for the year totaled $7,797,966.

• **New appointments:**

Susan Godshall, Africa director for Overseas Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.

Karen Kenagy Perez, director of La Casa de Maria y Marta, San Antonio, Texas.

• **Pastor transitions:**

Lois and Wilmer Hartman terminated as pastors of Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, on Sept. 30.

Willard Heatwole was installed as lead pastor at Gospel Hill Mennonite Church, Fulks Run, Va., on Aug. 4.

• **Coming events:**

Seminary Sampler, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Nov. 3-4. Open house for people considering seminary study or ministry. Includes worship in chapel, tours, class visits, and information about programs and financial aid. More information is available from Andrew Kreider at 800 964-2627.

Civilian Public Service Reconsidered: An "Extraordinary Paradox," Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pa., Nov. 4-7. Conference looks at the legacy of CPS and the lessons about conscientious objection to be learned from faith-based service. More information from 800 742-3150.

Selfhelp Crafts sale, Concord Mennonite Church, Knoxville, Tenn., Nov. 8-9. More information from 423 691-5347.

MCC Great Lakes annual meeting, Lee Heights Community Church, Cleveland, Ohio, Nov. 15-16. "Roots of Justice; Fruits of Peace" is the theme for the weekend. Information and registration available from MCC Great Lakes office, 330 857-7721.

1997 School for Leadership Training, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Jan. 20-23, 1997. "Pursuing Peace in the Congregation" will feature speakers Sara Wenger Shenk, Susan Mark Landis, J. Daryl Byler, and John Paul Lederach. Thirteen classes will be offered. A seminar on peace theology led by John Howard Yoder will precede the conference. Registration is available from the seminary at 540 432-4260.

• **New books:**

A Golden Sunbeam by Carrie Bender is the fifth and final volume of the Miriam's Journal series. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

No Strange Fire by Ted Wojtasik is a novel about the Amish community in Big Valley of central Pennsylvania, where six barns were burned in one night. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

Parenting the Prodigal by S. Rutherford McDill, Jr., is a collection of practical and inspirational tips for parents. The book aims to help parents of prodigals survive and even flourish amid the hurt and stress. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

• **Job openings:**

Admissions counselor, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Responsibilities include new student recruitment, primarily in Virginia. Qualifications include college degree, verbal and written communication skills, and willingness to travel. Position begins Nov. 15, application deadline is Oct. 25. Contact the EMU human resources office at 540 432-4108.

Asia mission administrator, Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Board of Missions. Responsibilities include representing North American agencies to partner churches and organizations in Asia, relating to overseas workers, and developing mission vision. Qualifications include work experience in Asia and administrative experience. Position begins June 1, 1997. Inquire by Dec. 15 to Glendon Klaassen at 316 283-5100 or Rachel Stoltzfus at 219 294-7423.

Associate general secretary, Mennonite Church General Board, Elkhart, Ind. Qualifications include education and experience in communications or journalism. More information from 219 294-7131.

Director of food service, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa. Responsibilities include meal planning and implementation for camp and retreat center, ordering, and staff supervision. RD preferred. Contact Camp Hebron at 800 864-7747.

Head cook, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa. Responsibilities include supervising food service staff in preparation, serving, and cleanup of meals for 50-200 people. Contact Camp Hebron at 800 864-7747.

Marketing staffperson, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa. Responsibilities include creating program brochures and giving marketing direction. Part-time, may work out of home. Contact Camp Hebron at 800 864-7747.

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Skewering donuts for relief. *Fishersville, Va.*—Laura E. Powers of Harrisonburg, Va., works the carefully orchestrated assembly line for the homemade donuts that quickly sold out at the 30th annual Virginia Relief Sale on Sept. 28. The sale grossed a record $189,132 for the worldwide program of Mennononite Cental Committee (MCC). Last year's total was $185,777, with a net of some $139,000 forwarded to MCC. This year's auction items—including quilts, handcrafted furniture, and artwork—raised $78,273.

The crowd consumed 15,000 homemade donuts and 4,000 chicken halves. —*Jim Bishop*

Voluntary service couple, Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa. Yearlong term; room, board, and stipend provided. Contact Camp Hebron at 800 864-7747.

NEW MEMBERS

Chestnut Ridge, Orrville, Ohio: Chip Boulton and Dusty Boulton.

East Goshen, Goshen, Ind.: Jenn Eiler, Joyce Graber, Hannah Greenawalt, Eric Holsopple, David Mast, Ben Mertz, Rachel Paulovich, Jonathan Paulovich, and Christopher Shetler.

First, Morton, Ill.: Chris Wright and Lori Wright.

Gulfhaven, Gulfport, Miss.: Mike, Laurie, Phillip, and Anthony Reynolds.

Hershey, Kinzers, Pa.: James Eby, Tim Hershey, Eric King, Michelle King, Amanda Martin, Kent Metzler, Christine Murray, and Joshua Murray.

Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: David and Dawn Holmgren.

Lindale, Harrisonburg, Va.: Mary K. Bowser and Elizabeth Heatwole.

Marion, Shipshewana, Ind.: Loren Kauffman.

Martins, Orrville, Ohio: Dan Blackford, Lyla Kornhaus, Herb Lantz, Dawn Lantz, Nathan Schlegel, Audrey Shoup, Matt Steiner, Andrew Steiner, Alice Hahn, and Ron Hahn.

Midway, Columbiana, Ohio: Ruth Keeler, Cheryl Vanatsky, and Carolyn Conrad.

Mount Clinton, Harrisonburg, Va.: Andrew Shantz, Sarah Shantz, Tim Shantz, Ernest Lam, Lori Lam, Pamela Lam, Sarah Lam, Benjamin Liscano, and Heidi Bowman.

Neffsville, Lancaster, Pa.: Rick and Missy Bemis, Ryan Eberly, Lyril Haneman, Justin Hess, Karen Kreider, and Jessica Strong.

North Clinton, Wauseon, Ohio: Nate and Trish André, Dave and Julie Gugel, Julie Kwiatkowski, Marlin and Esther Miller, Jeff Richer, Randy and Donna Shumaker, Doug and Jennifer Yoder, and Gail Yoder.

Oak Grove, Smithville, Ohio: Dora Short, James Via, Linda Via, Jonathan Via, Bridget Via, Steve Miller, Susan Miller, Tamara Gill, Candice Hershberger, Kevin Kindy, Maria Neuenschwander, Justin Plessinger, Sharon Smucker, and Gregory Via.

Pea Ridge, Palmyra, Mo.: Roland Clark, Darrell Zook, Pat Zook, Aaron Zook, Sara Zook, and Mark Zook.

Pleasant View, Goshen, Ind.: Brent and Vicki Hoylman, Don Hostetler, Cynthia Hostetler, Christa Hostetler, Claris Hostetler, Dustin Hostetler, Kim Mumaw, Karla Shepherd, and Patti Schrader.

Sunnyslope, Phoenix, Ariz.: Tony Gonzales and Nancy Gonzales.

Towamencin, Kulpsville, Pa.: Karyn Allebach.

Tressler, Greenwood, Del.: Debbie Schrock, Jena Griffith, and Mike and Bonnie Ellwanger.

BIRTHS

Blochlinger, Anne Mast and Darren, Millersburg, Ohio, Collin James (first child), Sept. 19.

Delp, Julia E. Swartzendruber and Gary K., Sellersville, Pa., Rebecca Joy (third child), Sept. 24.

Derstine, Denise Gahman and Brian, Sellersville, Pa., Jordan Alexander (second child), Sept. 26.

Haarer, Shari Reber and Phil, Goshen, Ind., Ryan James (second child), July 5.

Hathaway, Julie Osborne and Myron, Millersburg, Ind., Ellen Claire (first child), Sept. 17.

Lehman, Annette Zehr and Peter, Copenhagen, N.Y., Shania Renee (second child), Sept. 8.

Martin, Kristina Roth and Jeffrey, Lancaster, Pa., Isaac Roth (first child), Sept. 21.

Miller, Brenda Hamsher and Brian, Dover, Ohio, Brittany Elaine (first child), Sept. 24.

Miller, Kelly and Brent, Chesapeake, Va., Maggie Olivia (third child), Sept. 18.

Nafziger, Robin Rea and Dean, Phoenixville, Pa., Eden Rose (sixth child), Sept. 24.

Neer, Tina and John, Orrville, Ohio, Joshua Tyler (second child), May 23.

Ontiveros, Teresa Geiser and Angel, Orrville, Ohio, Rico Miguel (fourth child), Aug. 16.

Pfile, Jodi and Brian, Gahanna, Ohio, Jordan Marie (second child), July 15.

Prough, Colleen Sanford and Don, Goshen, Ind., Lois Anne (fourth child), May 15.

Riegsecker, Teresa Miller and Randy, Middlebury, Ind., Shawne Kay (second child), Aug. 6.

Schrock, Rita and Von, Apple Creek, Ohio, Corbin Andrew (second child), Sept. 6.

Schrock, Stacy and Darren, Buhler, Kan., Madison Paige (first child), Aug. 26.

Schumacher, Renee Thomas and Michael, Woodstock, Ill., Amolia Carrie (first child), Sept. 23.

Steider, Cindy and Doug, LaGrange, Ind., Megan Elizabeth (fourth child), Sept. 23.

Yoder, Jenny Loux and Chadwin, Silverdale, Pa., Joshua Drew (second child), Sept. 19.

Maple Leaf vs. Ivy League

As a high school senior, I was accepted at several colleges, including an Ivy League school. However, I couldn't justify spending tens of thousands of dollars at Harvard when a supportive congregation and attractive financial aid package made Goshen very affordable.

Now that I'm working at the accounting firm of Price Waterhouse, I don't regret choosing Goshen for an instant. My accounting courses prepared me well, but it was the classes beyond accounting that really made a difference. The liberal arts program helped develop my communication skills, something that is very important in a work situation.

Goshen College also fit my personality while giving me a broad education beyond the classroom. I wouldn't trade my SST experience for anything, and I was able to participate in a variety of activities, including working on the newspaper and playing on the Maple Leaf soccer team. I especially enjoyed the opportunity to rub elbows with people in several different disciplines.

— Pat Sauder, 1993 Goshen College graduate, CPA, Senior Auditor, Price Waterhouse

For more information:
Admissions Office
Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526
Phone: (800) 348-7422 or (219) 535-7535
Fax: (219) 535-7609
E-mail: "Admissions@Goshen.edu"
World-Wide Web: http://www.Goshen.edu

MARRIAGES

Ballard-Miller: Wendy Ballard, Kent, Ohio (First Mennonite of Canton), and Jon Miller, Hartville, Ohio (Bethany), Sept. 7, by Daniel R. Hooley.

Bender-Lehman: Alma Tammy Bender, Croghan, N.Y. (Croghan), and Walter Lehman, Lowville, N.Y. (Croghan), Sept. 21, by Bruce Lyndaker.

Burruss-Martin: Dustin Burruss, Nashville, Tenn. (Harmony), and Julie Martin, Nashville, Tenn. (Harmony), May 11, by Richard Wineland and Robert Yoder.

Bush-Ovando: Matthew Bush, Liverpool, N.Y. (Catholic), and Leslie Ovando, Beaver Falls, N.Y. (First Mennonite of New Bremen), Aug. 17, by Lester Bauman.

Fish-Trayer: Mark Fish, Fox Lake, Ill. (Lutheran), and Carmen Trayer, Wellman, Iowa (Wellman), Sept. 14, by Brian Gentz.

Grau-Rice: Susan Grau, Castorland, N.Y. (First Mennonite of New Bremen), and Shawn Rice, Lowville, N.Y. (Catholic), Aug. 24, by Bruce Lyndaker.

Hilty-Kauffman: Peggy Hilty, Dayton, Ohio (Huber), and Charles Kauffman, Beavercreek, Ohio (Huber), June 21, by Joseph Wood.

Kaufman-Lenz: Rosie Jo Kaufman, Manson, Iowa (Manson), and Bruce Lenz, Manson, Iowa (Lutheran), May 31, by Curt Kuhns.

Kolb-Smiley: William Kolb, Spring City, Pa. (Franconia), and Cynthia Smiley, Hiwassee, Va. (Hiwassee Chapel), Sept. 21, by John M. Ehst.

Kratz-Landis: Troy Kratz, Sellersville, Pa. (Line Lexington), and Delise Landis, Perkasie, Pa. (Perkasie), Sept. 21, by Lowell H. Delp and Craig Pelkey-Landis.

Kreider-Landis: Mardel Joy Kreider, Quarryville, Pa. (Media), and George Scott Landis, Schaefferstown, Pa. (Dove Christian Fellowship), Sept. 28, by H. Wesley Boyer.

Landis-Stoltzfus: Kenneth Landis, Anchorage, Alaska (Prince of Peace), and Rosetta Stoltzfus, Anchorage, Alaska, Sept. 29, by James Carpenter.

Lopes-Shantz: Amelia Lopes, St. Catherines, Ont., and Byron Shantz, St. Clements, Ont. (Wilmot), June 22, by Don Nighswander.

Miller-Reimer: Melissa Miller and Paul Reimer, Urbana, Ill. (Oak Grove), Feb. 3.

Murray-Sollenberger: Glenna Murray, Baton Rouge, La. (Nazarene), and Marcus Sollenberger, Dillsburg, Pa. (Slate Hill), Aug. 3, by Ralph West and James Staggs.

Nelson-Yoder: Chloe Nelson, Wellman, Iowa (United Methodist), and Lance Yoder, Iowa City, Iowa (East Union), Sept. 28, by Michael Loss.

Phillimore-Rice: Sandy Phillimore, Chardon, Ohio (Oak Grove), and Tim Rice, July 20, by Jim Schrag.

Pitts-Widrick: Deborah Pitts, Glenfield, N.Y. (First Mennonite of New Bremen), and Carlton Widrick, Martinsburg, N.Y., (First Mennonite of New Bremen), Aug. 9, by Lester Bauman.

Raines-Troyer: Gregory Raines, Fort Wayne, Ind., and Cindy Troyer, Shipshewana, Ind. (Clinton Frame), Aug. 17, by Samuel Sumner.

Shantz-Shantz: Kevin Shantz, New Dundee, Ont. (Bethel Missionary), and Penny Shantz, Baden, Ont. (Wilmot), June 8, by Glyn Jones.

DEATHS

Headings, Elva Mae, 73, Bellefontaine, Ohio. Born: Dec. 2, 1922, Bellefontaine, Ohio, to Frank and Lydia Hilty Headings. Died: Sept. 19, 1996. Survivors—sisters: Mary Helen Headings, Alma Fern Plank. Funeral and burial: Sept. 23, South Union Mennonite Church, by Randy Reminder.

Hostetler, Frieda A. Reed., 66, Bellefontaine, Ohio. Born: March 22, 1930, Bellefontaine, Ohio, to Loren C. and Gladys L. Patrick Reed. Died: Sept. 21, 1996, Columbus, Ohio. Survivors—husband: Robert Hostetler; stepsons: James R. and Donald Hostetler; 4 stepgrandchildren, one stepgreatgrandchild. Funeral: Sept. 25, Eicholtz Funeral Home, by Randy Reminder and William Zeller. Burial: Bellefontaine Cemetery.

Hostetler, Loyal, 89, Smithville, Ohio. Born: Nov. 24, 1906, Farmerstown, Ohio, to Alvin A. and Ellen Shutt Hostetler. Died: Aug. 9, 1996, Canton, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Betty Burkholder Hostetler; children: Ellen Sprunger, Charles; sister: Lola Hutchinson; 5 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral and burial: Aug. 12, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, by Norma Duerksen.

Kapper, Melvin J., 75, Hartville, Ohio. Born: Dec. 20, 1920, Kent, Ohio, to Lewis and Catherine Eberhardt Kapper. Died: Sept. 17, 1996, Akron, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—wife: Bernice Hershberger Kapper; children: Charlene Fausnight, Dennis, David; brothers and sisters: Raymond, Marion, LaVern, Alfred, Cyril, Ethel Carr, Catherine Henderham; 9 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Sept. 20, Beech Mennonite Church, by Melvin Leidig and Wayne Brockway.

Kaufman, Mattie Jane Kennel, 102, Manson, Iowa. Born: Jan. 8, 1894, O'Neill, Neb., to Chris and Mary Kennel. Died: Sept. 1, 1996, Manson, Iowa. Survivors—children: Bernice Johnson, Marie, Ralph, Will, Wayne; 10 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Joseph W. Kaufman (husband) and Marcille Davidhizer (daughter). Funeral: Sept. 5, Manson Mennonite Church, by Curt Kuhns. Burial: Rose Hill Cemetery.

Kresse, Florence Anna Meyer, 83, Bedford, Ohio. Born: Sept. 22, 1912, Pittsburgh, Pa. Died: Sept. 9, 1996, Stow, Ohio. Survivors—husband: John P. Kresse; children: John, Jr., Robert, Marianne McMichael, Patricia Stepnicka; 8 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Friendship Mennonite Church. Funeral: Sept. 12, St. John Funeral Home, by David Orr. Burial: Hillcrest Memorial Park.

Miller, Nettie M. Glick, 89, Walnut Creek, Ohio. Born: Nov. 4, 1906, Holmes County, Ohio, to Christian C. and Maggie Yoder Glick. Died: Sept. 21, 1996, Walnut Creek, Ohio. Survivors—stepchildren: Vernon, Vern, and Duane Miller; brothers and sisters: Leon, Lester, and Grace Glick, Carol Kaufman. Predeceased by: John P. Miller (husband). Funeral and burial: Sept. 24, Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, by Ross A. Miller and Vern Miller.

Price, Timothy Charles, 29, Allensville, Pa. Born: Aug. 14, 1967, Johnstown, Pa., to James A. and Sally Sinclair Price. Died: Sept. 22, 1996, Allensville, Pa. Survivors—brothers and sisters: James A. Jr., Brian M., Matthew C., Janice Johnson, Judy Peachey. Funeral and burial: Sept. 25, Allensville Mennonite Church, by Paul Bender and Edward Sinclair.

Roth, Luetta M. Gautsche, 87, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Sept. 6, 1909, Archbold, Ohio, to Henry and Mary Grieser Gautsche. Died: Sept. 20, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivors—husband: Truman Roth; children: Roger, James, Mabel Ann Klinger, Marlene Graf; sister: Selma Sauder; 14 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 22, Zion Mennonite Church, by Ron Guengerich and Dee Swartz. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Teuscher, Lydia M., 84, Pigeon, Mich. Born: May 17, 1912, Pigeon, Mich., to Joseph and Anna Hochstetler Shetler. Died: Sept. 19, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—children: Carol Beachey, Wilma Mast, Ruth Rice, Marjorie, Patricia Gascho, Wayne; brother and sisters: Daniel, Mary Bollen, Agnes Swartzendruber; 11 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Harry W. Teuscher (husband) and Mary Joan (daughter). Funeral and burial: Sept. 24, Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, by Luke Yoder.

Yoder, Verda L. Maust, 90, Springs, Pa. Born: Feb. 18, 1906, Springs, Pa., to Ed and Mable Dennison Maust. Died: Sept. 16, 1996, Grantsville, Md. Survivors—son: Edward D.; 3 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: George E. Yoder (husband) and Jay Yoder (son). Funeral: Sept. 19, Springs Mennonite Church, by Steven J. Heatwole. Burial: Springs Cemetery.

Alumni team leaves for tour. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—A five-person Discipleship Ministries alumni team left from Eastern Mennonite Missions headquarters on Sept. 26 to spend two months traveling throughout Canada and the United States promoting discipleship training centers and encouraging youth to be involved in missions. General Conference Mennonite churches in Vancouver, B.C., invited the alumni team to lead them in preparation for starting a discipleship training center in the summer of 1997. The team will spend the first four weeks with church leaders, sharing the details and structure of the Youth Evangelism Service program. The second month will be spent with Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite, and Mennonite Brethren colleges, high schools, churches, and youth groups in Kansas, Iowa, Indiana, and Ohio.

The team includes the following (left to right): *Front:* Jennifer Weaver, Michelle Stauffer. *Back:* Alvin Streicher, Kevin Nofziger, Amiee Wright.

Invest in Mennonite education

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Solitaire

Like Ron Helmuth (page 1), I grew up in a home without television. Back then, TV was too new to have any redeeming value in most church people's minds.

Radio. Now it had been around long enough to make it more acceptable. We had one in our home, though officially it was frowned on by church elders. My parents tried to monitor our listening, questioning why I found "Our Miss Brooks" and "The Great Gildersleeve" so fascinating. But they saved most of their energies for bigger battles.

Like cards. Aside from old maid, playing cards were taboo in our house. Too close to gambling and other evils. It wasn't until college that I discovered rook. I never did learn gin rummy or bridge.

But I discovered the joys of solitaire when I got my current notebook computer. Yes, it happened during one of those innumerable meetings I attend as editor of this publication. On this occasion, I-won't-tell-who was going on about I-don't-remember-what. Three minutes into the speech, I knew there was nothing there for me. So I began investigating the possibilities of my computer.

That's how I found the icon labeled "Solitaire." A click of the mouse, and I had before me a dazzling array of kings, queens, and jacks, all waiting to be manipulated. How? Another click got me enough "Help" to take a practice round. And then another. And another. Half an hour later, I realized the speech was long since over, and the meeting had progressed two items farther down the agenda. I was hooked.

My wife says addicted. She made that pronouncement at the end of our vacation this summer after I spent most of my inside hours with my computer, playing solitaire. It's recreation, relaxation, I told her, a way to forget everyday life.

A couple of weeks back in the office, I had to admit she was right. I was on a phone conversation that was getting too long and tedious. So I flicked up the solitaire screen and began playing. I don't remember today what the subject of that conversation was. I do remember that I scored a perfect $208 on one hand (I use Vegas scoring!).

I've also discovered Ron Helmuth is right. It's much easier for me to gravitate to the computer when I have a few minutes of free time than it is to pay attention to the things that really matter: meditating on the Scripture I've read that morning, taking a walk with my wife, praying for my friend in trouble. I've also discovered it's quite easy for me to escape into solitaire when I'm depressed, facing difficult situations, or discouraged with the way things are going.

So what's the solution? Swear off solitaire? I could. But then I'd be missing out on something I enjoy immensely—and something I find to be true relaxation. Then even what I do in my spare time would become a struggle.

I suspect a better solution is to put solitaire into perspective, to use it for what it can give me without letting it completely take over my life.

Helmuth gives me at least two good ways to do this. One is to constantly ask questions: Should I play? Should I engage? Is this really what I need right now? Are there better ways to achieve what I'm after?

The second thing is to "intentionally disengage," as Helmuth puts it. That is, I need to block out those times when I deliberately choose not to play and instead take a hike, watch a bird, talk with someone, sit in silence. Otherwise my fantasy world of computer cards can too easily take over my reality world as I scheme and strategize about how to spend more time with my computer.

All this, of course, is nothing new. Years ago my grandmother struggled to separate reality from fantasy. She did it by refusing to allow any works of fiction in her house. Grandma said if anyone had time to read, what they read should at least be *true*.

So the struggle continues. What makes it more intense today, as Helmuth notes, is the way electronic technology can completely take over our lives. If his statistics are true, most of us are spending more than half our waking hours with electronic media in some way.

That calls for a great deal of vigilance and intentionality on our part. Otherwise, we will discover that the virtual reality of TV, radio, stereo, and computer has become our total reality. And we will become more fragmented and more solitary as a result.—*jlp*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

North American Christians rarely face the question Jesus asked: "Are you ready to drink the cup I am about to drink?" Nor are we directed to the story of Stephen as a model for evangelism and church growth.

From flaccid whiners to authentic witnesses

Against every law of North American advertising, martyrdom has always been the most effective propaganda for biblically focused church growth.

by James E. Brenneman

American Christians, on average, lack true grit when it comes to witnessing. The best of us are spiritually anemic, flaccid whiners who think others will not be interested in hearing what Christ has done for us. We are the richest, best-read, most-educated Christians in the world, we have the best marketing strategies for evangelism hands-down—but we are the least effective witnesses. If it's merely an inward experience we're trying to inspire, who cares what Christ has done for us when transcendental meditation or internal medication or L. Ron Hubbard can effectively do the same?

Our ineffectiveness as witnessing folk may have something to do with our attitudes about what witnessing means. In the New Testament, witnessing wasn't so much about living as it was about dying. The word *witness* is the same as the word for *martyr*. Against every law of American advertising, martyrdom has always been the most effective propaganda for biblically focused church growth. The question American Christians rarely face is the one Jesus asked of all his followers upon entering his kingdom: "Are you ready to drink the cup

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

C. Norman Kraus:
Peace: a Mennonite restriction or a gospel fundamental? 6

Publication Board approves plans to adjust book publishing 9

Mennonites support arms reduction measure 10

North Americans have almost completely lost any sense of what it means to be a church of martyrs. Being poked fun at in television sitcoms hardly qualifies.

[of suffering and the cross] I am about to drink?" (Matt. 20:22). Rarely, if ever, are North American Christians directed to the story of Stephen as a witness worthy of our reflection when it comes to evangelism and church growth. Stephen was the first recorded martyr, the first true witness of Christ after the birth of the New Testament church in Acts.

Luke, the writer of Acts, tells the story of Stephen as a story to mirror the passion of Jesus. Stephen, like Jesus, is tried before the Jewish council on trumped-up charges. Stephen is the only New Testament character except Jesus to speak about the "Son of Man" (Stephen sees the Son of Man in a vision while he's being stoned). Just before dying, both Jesus and Stephen commit their spirits to God. Both cry out in loud voices to God as they are dying; both ask God not to hold their executions against those doing them; and both deaths provoke the spread of the gospel—in Jerusalem (after Jesus' death) and to Judea and Samaria (after Stephen's death), with hints of it going even further.

Luke's story in Acts is the first *Martyrs Mirror* story in the New Testament. Stephen's life and death bore witness, like a mirror, to the life and death of Jesus. True witness means to imitate Christ, to mirror Christ, or at least to mirror Stephen who mirrors Christ (1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1). To mirror Christ, to be a witness for Christ, is to become a martyr.

The North American church has almost completely lost any sense of what it means to be a witnessing church, a church of martyrs. Much as we'd like to think so, being the subject of jokes in television sitcoms and movies and not praying in public schools hardly qualifies us to claim martyrdom.

Even if such slight persecution did meet the criteria of martyrdom, our reaction to it suggests we have not yet begun to mirror Christ's (and Stephen's) witness. Our first reaction has been to fight back, to cry out in condemnation against our so-called persecutors. Stephen and Jesus, in contrast, cried out with loud voices: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Stephen); "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Jesus). Have we begun to pray in such loving tone and concern for those we believe persecute us? Are we willing to bear the scandal of a sin-infested world attacking us to the point of death when we can't even do so when only our feelings are hurt? Can we witness effectively when we can't even forgive each other within the church and our homes, much less love and forgive those outside the church?

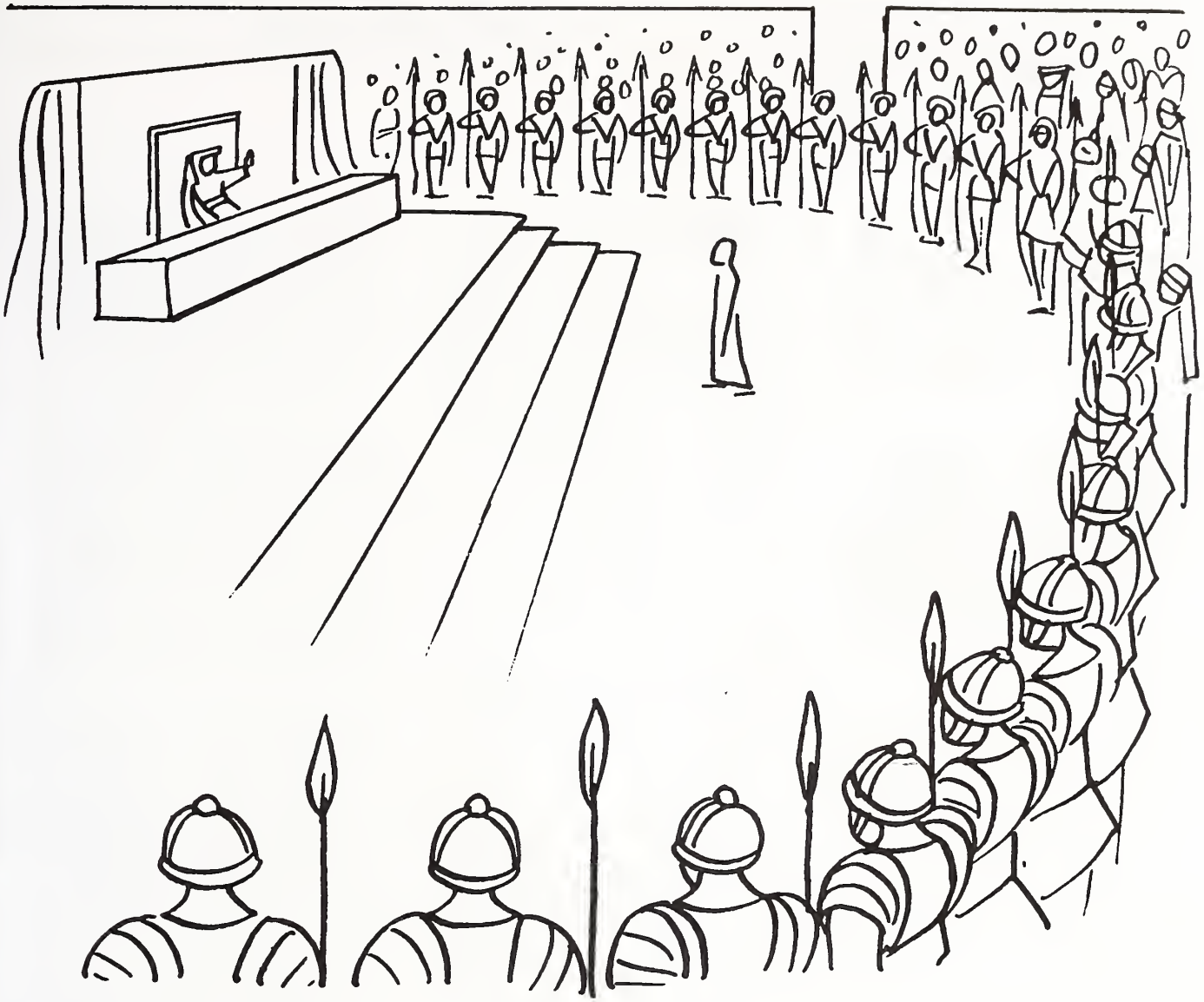
If North American Christians are going to be disciples of Christ, we need to realize that suffering for righteousness' sake is part of what it means to mirror Christ to the world, to witness. What good news is it to love only those who love you back? Even unbelievers do that much. Good news—something worth talking about—is forgiving those who persecute us and those we hate.

We North American Christians are so centered on our own spiritual navels, on finding meaning, on the right spiritual techniques. We're not mirroring Jesus or Stephen. We're looking at our own well-fed, well-taught, well-financed bodies, souls, and spirits and complaining. And we expect others to be attracted to our Christian faith?

Now we shouldn't go around begging to be martyred. Martyrdom is no ticket to heaven, nor does it gain us an ounce of grace or merit. But we can begin to appreciate the full significance of what it means to live and die like Jesus and Stephen. We can contemplate what it might mean if we would attempt in even small ways to mirror the martyrdom of those Christians who have literally experienced such cross-bearing pathos. My guess is that if we approached in spirit what others have experienced in the flesh, the church of Jesus would experience true reformation of unparalleled consequence.

We Mennonite Christians, of all people, should cherish the heritage we have as a church bearing the legacy of martyrdom. Menno Simons whose name our church bears, was born 500 years ago. Thousands of our Mennonite ancestors by birth and by faith—like Stephen and Jesus—were dragged before councils and magistrates on false charges. They were stretched on racks, had their tongues cut out, and were burned at the stake, roasted on pillars, lynched on trees, killed by swords, cut up, drowned, and beheaded.

This occurred because they were considered heretics. The mission of the church has often been kept alive by the blood of such "heretics." The genetic origins of the church lie in the blood of its martyr-witnesses. *Martyrs Mirror*, written in 1660, collates many stories of these true believers. In the verbatim accounts of their defense, they offer the most eloquent testimonies of their utter devotion to Christ



and their willingness to forgive their persecutors.

Anabaptist confessions of faith were confessions of martyrs. In Anabaptism the word *confession* regains its original seriousness when one considers that they were defending themselves before the court, like Stephen and Jesus had before them. These confessions of faith weren't lists of doctrines or the creeds of an established church looking for ways to enforce its theology against heretics. Rather, their confessions were those of martyrs witnessing before state churches that wanted to kill them.

The church grew rapidly under persecution—so much so that the Burger of Alsace despaired in 1529, "What shall I do? The more I sentence and execute them, the more numerous they become." Amazing too is the fact that these believers were full of joy in the midst of their hardships. These were no morbid soul-winners.

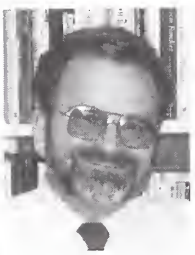
When Menno Simons was captured by the Prince of Saxony, the prince asked him, "Do you know who I am and how much I'm worth?" Menno replied, "Hmmm . . . our Lord was valued at 30 pieces of silver, so I'd better not set yours higher than, shall we say, 29." The prince laughed. "Well spoken for a man who has a price on his head, and considerably more than 29 gilders in your own land. What do you suggest I do with you?" Menno replied, "Perhaps let me return to the country which obviously overvalues me so foolishly." "Be gone then," said the prince (Augsburger, "Menno Simons' Birthday Tales," *Festival Quarterly*, Winter 1996).

Martyrdom robs only the murderer of joy, while the faithful martyr witnesses to the power of God in the worst of circumstances. Stephen had visions of glory and bliss while his persecutors were miserable, enraged, gnashing their teeth, and boxing their ears. That God is with us and can give us joy even in the worst of trials is true evangelical faith.

About 20 years ago, the Ethiopian Mennonite church, with 5,000 members, was nearly wiped *(continued on page 8)*

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!"—Ps. 96:8-10a, NRSV

Gospel Herald



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READERS SAY

"My Vision for the Mennonite Church"? I would like to see us put some added meat onto our core commitment to the teachings of Jesus. We are certainly dedicated to peace and justice issues, but the gospel includes many other areas: humility, willingness to be persecuted, and selling your possessions.

We also ought to be pursuing these teachings and actions of Jesus, seeking out the whole of his gospel. We can do so by taking the following actions:

a. Seek out new areas in which the church can apply and act out the gospel, not just flounder in perpetual study.

b. Study the whole of Scripture to understand Jesus' perspective on the Bible.

c. Act as evangelists to the church at large, gently and humbly teaching them how to follow Jesus in action as well as in worship and doctrine.

Steve Kimes
Portland, Ore.

In her editorial, ***Little Girls and Their Journals*** (Sept.17), Valerie implies that little girls who do not see women in church leadership roles may feel less about themselves and their ideas. Is she saying that a woman's worth is dependent on the position she holds? That only by obtaining the position of pastor will her ideas and thoughts find validation?

Galatians 3:28, which Weaver quotes, when kept in its context, clearly shows that a person's worth in Christ is not dependent on race, position, or gender. Why then do egalitarians insist, as Weaver seems to do, that little girls need to see women in leadership positions in order for them to feel good about themselves? This stance points to a religion based on works, one that exalts the world's definition of power through position over power through faith in the saving grace of our Lord.

All have received gifts from the Holy Spirit, but only through a true understanding and practice of their God-given roles will women and men realize their full ministry potential. Let us not elevate our human desire for worldly power and acknowledgment over the wisdom of our God, who created women and men with complementary differences and gave us different but complementary roles within our homes and church families.

When my little girl is nine years old, I hope she looks around her and sees a church where women and men celebrate these differences in faithful obedience to God's Word, not a church that judges a woman's worth by the position she does or does not hold.

Henry Werner
Mount Joy, Pa.

Norman Teague's letter ("Readers Say," Oct. 1) encourages me to write. Like him, I'm not a leader. So my vision for the Mennonite church must not be 2,000 words.

I see a church with Jesus Christ as its head and foundation, a church of quality, not quantity. It's a church that stops counting members, that has fewer institutions. It tries every activity and operates by consensus, not majority rule.

This church prays, sings, and studies the Bible. Its faith grows from the bottom up, not the top down.

This church has no leaders, only servants. These listen, not declare; ask, not preach. They make coffee instead of memos. They clean the bathrooms. And they feed lambs, not wolves.

That's my vision—in less than 100 words!

Mieke C. Malandra
Lebanon, Pa.

Little Girls and Their Journals (Sept. 17). There are many opinions about women in leadership in the church today. Some are all for it, even to the point of forcing it on others. Others are strongly against it. What does the Bible say?

Gal. 3:28 is about being children of God. There is no mention of leadership in the church in this passage.

In 1 Cor. 14, women are told to remain silent. It's even *disgraceful* for women to speak in the church. First Tim. 2 supports this argument.

Women do have an important role in the church. Titus 2 speaks about older women mentoring and teaching the younger women. This is vital for a healthy church. But the Bible states that women are not to preach or teach in the congregation. That would be taking authority over a man, which the Bible clearly says is wrong.

The debate should not be over whether women are good enough or smart enough to be in leadership. God created both in his image, but he creat-

ed them differently. Instead of trying to be like men, women need to cultivate the gifts God gave them. Since men and women are equal in Christ, does it matter that they have been given different roles to perform?

Likely this controversy will never come to a complete end. But it is important to remember to look to the Bible for the answers, not to our overwrought minds. The Bible does give the answers and guidance to the questions we have about life, if we pray for these answers. God will guide us if only we ask.

Rebecca Ernest
Lititz, Pa.

I was catching up on my reading of *Gospel Herald* when I came across the Aug. 20 edition of "Pontius' Puddle." And I see that one of my favorite characters in *Gospel Herald* has joined the ranks of the politically correct. Sigh!

I am very interested in thoughtful discussions of the social and political issues of our day, particularly in the context of our Christian faith. However, the vain repetition of the empty, divisive rhetoric in this cartoon serves only to incite passions and encourage dissension. I also question the veracity of the assertions in this piece.

I hear this kind of babbling from many other segments of our society. I expect more from "Pontius' Puddle" and *Gospel Herald*!

Brenda Smith Meyer
Kennett Square, Pa.

I'm troubled by all the negative things about Promise Keepers in "Readers Say" (for example, the letter in Sept. 24). The fact that many men are being reached and touched by the Lord through Promise Keepers cannot be denied. We as Mennonite men can all benefit by attending one of these conferences if we go with the right attitude and spirit.

Some Promise Keepers activities are different from what we are used to. This can be a means of loosening us up to be more expressive in our lives and in our worship. Of course, Promise Keepers has some weaknesses, just like we Mennonite also have.

Mennonite men, for the most part, are weak in leadership in the home and in the church. Promise Keepers addresses these needs and equips men of God to be leaders and to relate better to their wives and their children.

Clair C. Heimbach
Selinsgrove, Pa.

Who's to Go: Liberals or Conservatives? (Oct. 1) is a question I've been pondering for a long time. Many months before the merger vote was taken, a General Conference Mennonite friend said to me: "The women in my church do not want you people who wear the veiling and dresses sitting in their Sunday school classes and serving on committees with them."

I asked my friend what options I have. She did not know.

I have read the series "My Vision for the Mennonite Church," including our being a church for "all" people as we "celebrate our differences." But where are the articles from my conservative brothers? Where are the pictures of women in dresses and veilings?

I do not see a new-creature, old-things-have-passed-away look. I see church people, leaders included, who look just like my unsaved neighbors.

I have been told that if I continue to wear a veiling, I am not wanted as we celebrate our differences. So what am I going to do?

Marian Harnly
East Petersburg, Pa.

I appreciated the editorial, ***Who's to Go: Liberals or Conservatives?*** (Oct. 1). Yes, Jesus is our Savior and Lord and the core of our belief. The words we speak and write should reflect exactly that.

By contrast, these days we find ourselves deciphering verbiage as the political pundits dream up ever new ways to influence our minds. For example, taxes are "investments." Invading another country is "an occupation." Tax increases are "deficit reduction." Armaments are "peacekeepers."

We can easily be taken in by this secular psychobabble. That includes using the word "spiritual," which our society uses to describe anything from the human spirit to sexual experiences, high adventure, and even physical exercise. But we must remember that to be spiritual is to be God-connected.

H. Walter Christner
Sarasota, Fla.

In his letter (Oct. 1), Fred Kanagy says, "We need to believe with all our heart that everything that happens to us as God's children is either designed by God or allowed by God for our good."

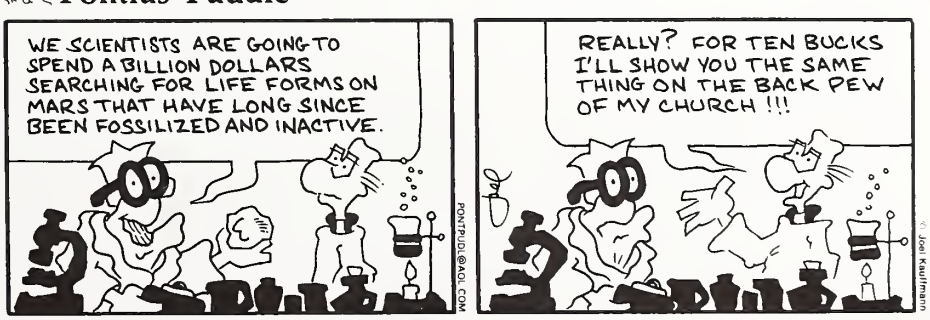
I find I can't do that. To me it would mean that God allowed my cousin's wife to be brutally beaten on the head with a hammer for her good. To say that good can come from evil is one thing. But to say that God designs or allows evil for our good is something quite different.

The problem of why bad things happen to good people is one that each of us has to attempt to solve for ourselves. I don't think there is any one answer that is required in order to be a child of God.

I believe that God doesn't manipulate human events. God does walk with us in the midst of human events. There are things that happen for which we are not responsible: cancer, accidents, random acts of violence. No one is singled out. No one is being punished. Nor is it part of God's grand design. It is one of the risks of being human and living in a world where people can choose to do evil as well as good.

Richard Hostetler
Goshen, Ind.

Pontius' Puddle



Peace: a Mennonite restriction

Today we no longer consider nonresistance a "restriction." Instead we have internalized the concept of peace and debate how it relates to being saved.

by C. Norman Kraus

The time has come for Mennonites to ask ourselves some questions: What does it mean that in our most recent confessions of faith (1963, 1995), we have dropped the language of nonresistance as a "restriction"? Is an ethical commitment to the nonviolent way of Christ integral to the salvation experience? Is peace with God and other human beings a gospel fundamental, or is it merely a Mennonite restriction?

From the 1890s to 1950s, our Mennonite doctrinal discussions and confessions began to speak of nonresistance as a "restriction." In the writings of church leaders such as John S. Coffman and Daniel Kauffman, nonresistance is located doctrinally as a "restriction"—that is, a Mennonite distinctive which is not by definition a part of the gospel of salvation. For example, in the 1921 confession, *The Christian Fundamentals*, nonresistance is placed in the article titled, "Restrictions," and is limited to the mention of "carnal warfare."

Prior to this time in our history, nonresistance designated a way of life which, of course, included objection to warfare but was broader in scope. The definition of peace included nonretaliation or nonresistance as an essential aspect, but peace was not equated with them. Peace was considered an integral part of the gospel. Indeed, the gospel was often referred to as "the gospel of peace."

Of course, the practical applications of nonresistance were debated. Arguable practical issues included civil lawsuits, degrees of participation in government—(since it depended on the use of force), and payment of fines in lieu of military service. There was firm agreement among Mennonites, however, that peace meant nonparticipation in the military.

There was also a theological disagreement about the right of civil government to take human life. Some argued against the legitimacy of the death penalty and against war as political strategy of the state. Others argued that the state has been given the "sword" by God, but the church and those who belong to it should not participate in such state functions since they are "outside the perfection of Christ." Although the lines of debate have moved, these issues are still with us.

Today, although we have dropped the language of "restrictions," we have internalized the concept of peace. We are now debating the nature of peace and how it relates to being saved. This shift in itself denotes a major change in the meaning of "being saved." Is peace merely an inner psycho-spiritual experience of justification, as in peace with God, or does it include moral commitments to be lived out in the social order? Is salvation simply to be equated with the initial experience of inner spiritual peace?

One can trace very explicitly this process of redefinition in Mennonite churches. In short, it came about with the acceptance of revivalism and the theology associated with it. Such theology did indeed refresh a tradition which had become too legalistic, but it also brought an implicit challenge to the Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of the "gospel of peace."

Revivalism makes salvation depend on an "experience" with Christ. This experience is described as "accepting Christ as Savior" or "receiving Christ." Fundamentalism makes it depend on believing fundamental doctrines. Faith is defined as doctrinal belief, and one affirms assurance of salvation "by faith," whether or not feelings accompany the commitment. In contemporary jargon, this is the goal of evangelism as contrasted to discipling. By definition, discipling is a post-salvation process, not essential to salvation itself.

Equating salvation with a spontaneous declaration or experience raises the question of when a person should be considered a member of the church. In fundamentalism and revivalism, church membership belongs at the point of the initial belief commitment or experience. Salvation of the soul is pinpointed at that moment, and salvation is the sole requirement for church membership. Indeed, some groups who give an altar call during Sunday worship practice baptism on the spot.

By contrast, the church of the first three centuries made baptism and church membership much more difficult. Salvation of the soul, of course, was in God's hands, but its confirmation by the church in baptism depended on a process of "satisfaction." This involved a long

or a gospel fundamental?

period—sometimes years—of teaching, prayer, fasting, and exorcism to prove one's understanding and sincerity. Interested persons were received as "cathecumens," or apprentices and given a clear but limited identification with the church. Baptism and full membership was postponed until the local congregation was satisfied with the applicant's genuineness and depth of commitment to the lifestyle and doctrine of the church.

In their return to the faith of the pre-Constantinian church, our Anabaptist-Mennonite forebears did not adopt this severe regimen for church membership. They did require a demonstrative commitment to faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ, however, and a willingness to take up the cross and follow Jesus. "Taking up the cross" meant taking the same stance toward society and the civic order that Jesus took. It was understood that membership meant martyrdom—suffering witness to the nonviolent way of Christ.

What does this imply for our contemporary dialogue on the relation of a peace commitment and church membership? The peace issue is only symptomatic of a broad range of issues that face us as we attempt to contextualize the gospel in our own American culture. Several areas of doctrinal definition need our careful attention.

First, we need to correct the erroneous implications of identifying nonresistance as a "restriction." This is an unintended leftover from a legalistic way of thinking. The nonviolence of Jesus is at the heart of the gospel. Leaders of an earlier generation did not intend to make nonresistance a side issue. People like Daniel Kauffman and George R. Brunk insisted that nonresistance was one of the "fundamentals," even though they classified it as a "restriction."

Second, we need to reexamine the meaning of Christ's good news as the "gospel of peace." We *(continued on page 8)*

"Taking up the cross" means taking the same stance toward society and the civic order that Jesus took—and suffering nonviolently just as Jesus suffered.

(continued from page 7)

must interpret the meaning and scope of Christ's lordship and the relationship of his lordship to salvation. This was a deep concern of Jesus and the first church; in the words of Jesus, "Why do you call me Lord, and do not obey me?"

Third, we need to reestablish the meaning and responsibilities of church membership. Clearly, in the believers church, baptism and church membership should take place upon the sincere confession of Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Lord. While such a confession may not represent a fully mature understanding, membership assumes a basic agreement with the church's confessional position and participation in the dialogue of discernment. This places the responsibility for a nurturing dialogue on the congregation. Membership is not taken for granted as an irrevocable mark or status; rather, it assumes the need for a person's continuing spiritual development and growing self-identity as a responsible participant in the congregation.

C. Norman Kraus, Harrisonburg, Va., is a retired pastor, professor, and missionary to Asia. He has written numerous articles and books, including his latest, Community of the Spirit *and* God Our Savior *(both Herald Press).*

From flaccid whiners to authentic witnesses

(continued from page 3)

out during the brutal Marxist dictatorship and was forced to go underground. Today, it has grown to 50,000. The church outlasted the brutal regime and grew because members mirrored the life and death of Jesus and all other Christian martyrs before them.

Ahmed Haile, a Somali Mennonite and a college friend of mine, was living and working for World Vision in Somalia during the time of the political upheaval a few years ago. His leg was blown off by enemy mortars. I saw him again a little over a year ago, and he was without any trace of bitterness in his spirit. At that time, he felt a call to mirror Christ's life once again in his homeland; he was hoping to return with his new artificial leg and in the name of Christ to serve those who had persecuted him. He has realized that goal by returning to Africa to teach under Eastern Mennonite Missions. That's either foolishness or true evangelical faith.

About the same time but closer to home, Gregory Alan-Williams, an African-American from Los Angeles, Calif., heard on his car radio that several motorists were being stoned with bricks at the intersection of Florence and Normandie, flashpoint of the infamous Los Angeles riots. He felt compelled to go there. Alan-Williams had been viciously attacked 23 years earlier by a group of white college students. Yet instead of wanting revenge, he chose to protect a white man who slumped unconscious over his steering wheel while the mob pummeled him with bottles and rocks. Alan-Williams grabbed the bloody victim under his arm and towed him to safety.

Gregory Alan-Williams mirrored the life and death of Christ. He was compelled, he said, to go. He never said what compelled him—whether it was revenge, excitement, or something more. Whatever it was, when he arrived, he chose not to seek revenge for an old wound. Rather, he risked his life to save that complete stranger of the "enemy" race. That, too, is true evangelical faith.

The last step for a Jesuit novitiate to become a full-fledged member of the Society of Jesus is a simple but powerful ceremony. He is not asked to confess a whole bunch of creeds or to swear on a stack of Bibles or to promise how many souls he'll win for Jesus or any number of other possibilities to prove his mettle. He simply lies facedown on the floor before the cross, while all the names of fellow Jesuits who have died as martyr-witnesses are read, name by name by name.

The next time we prepare for the Lord's Supper, can we pause to hear Christ's words to all would-be witnesses of his life: "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?" May our reply be like that of his first disciples, "Yes, Lord, with your help, we are able."

James E. Brenneman is pastor of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church and professor of Old Testament at Episcopal School of Theology at Claremont.

Publication Board approves plans to adjust book publishing operations

Harrisonburg, Va.—Downsizing? Rightsizing? Adjusting to market realities?

The members of the Mennonite Publication Board (MPB) weren't quite sure what to call it when they met at the Park View Mennonite Church, Oct. 11-12. But they did agree Herald Press, the book publishing arm of Mennonite Publishing House (MPH), had to make adjustments so expenses do not outstrip income.

The board gave a nod to a management plan to decrease the number of books published each year from 25-30 to 18. As a result, Herald Press staff will also decrease from two to one full-time editor.

"This may not last forever," treasurer Reuben Savanick told the board. "But it seems to be the step we need to take now."

Negative numbers. This downsizing of Herald Press comes after several years of negative numbers. Preliminary figures indicate the current year is no better, though Herald Press director Paul M. Schrock reported sales increased substantially in September.

Schrock also reported that Herald Press has adopted a four-month freeze on accepting any new book manuscripts. The 1997 schedule is already full, and staff does not feel it should start making commitments for 1998, Schrock said.

Adjusting Herald Press is one way to improve the overall MPH picture, publisher J. Robert Ramer told the board.

"The key for our total operation will be the Christmas season," Ramer said. "Last year our bookstores were closed for a total of 10 days during the Christmas season because of the weather. That hurt us. If we have a good Christmas season this year, we'll have a good financial year."

"How can we help you?" several board members asked.

Integration discussion. "The most significant thing you can help us with are integration issues," Savanick responded. "We need some help in knowing how to move, and when and when not to spend money on working toward integration."

MPB devoted an hour and a half of its agenda to discussion of integration, working with the future of publishing in an integrated church, a publication to replace *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite*, and a joint yearbook / handbook.

"I feel strongly that we need to relieve management of the responsibilities of carrying the integration discussions," said J. Glen Hostetler, Lancaster, Pa., a new board member. "For a board to ask management to work on integration on top of everything else they have to do doesn't seem right."

MPB agreed to spend time on integration again at its February meeting.

In other business, the board:

- gave assent to a new corporate image plan for MPH, including a new logo and a standardized type face;
- adopted the Wichita '95 statement, "Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love." "This reflects how we have dealt with conflict in the organization," said board member Ron Guengerich, Archbold, Ohio.
- participated in several activities connected with homecoming weekend at Eastern Mennonite University.

—J. Lorne Peachey

Preparing for harvest:

New York churches meet for fellowship

New York City—The 13th annual convention of the New York City Mennonite churches drew more than 500 people to the First Presbyterian Church in Flushing, Queens, on Sept. 27-28. Sponsored by the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches, the convention brings together congregation for worship and fellowship during the last weekend of September each year.

Members of First Mennonite Church of Brooklyn (left to right)—Vladimir Rodriguez, Wanda Rodriguez, Elsa Sandoval, and Nicolas Sandoval—present a skit on "Preparing for Harvest," the theme of the 13th annual convention of New York City Mennonite churches, held Sept. 27-28.

Events included three worship services, children's activities, and Saturday morning seminars. Members of each of the 15 participating congregations contributed to the worship services by singing or presenting original skits or Scripture readings related to the theme, "Preparing for Harvest." The congregational presentations were conducted in Amharic, English, Garifuna, and Spanish.

David Greco, executive director of Radio Vision Cristiana, was the guest speaker.

Saturday morning seminars included "Devotional and Intercessory Prayer" led by Addie Banks (King of Glory Tabernacle, Bronx, N.Y.) and "Evangelizing Through 'Growing Groups' " led by Nicolas Angustia (United Revival Mennonite Church, Brooklyn).

Convention attenders also viewed displays from local Mennonite churches and organizations.

—Naomi Yoder

Mennonites support arms reduction measure

Washington, D.C. (MCC U.S.)—"I have seen teenagers in Liberia and Angola who have learned to shoot before learning to read," declared U.S. Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum of Kansas on July 25, in offering her support for an arms transfer code of conduct. "I have seen countries whose meager coffers have been drained to purchase weapons of war while their people suffer an unconscionable standard of living," she said.

Petitions. Despite Kassebaum's testimony, the U.S. Senate defeated an amendment to the 1997 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that would have set criteria to restrict U.S. arms sales. More than 1,000 Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from 24 states signed petitions supporting the code of conduct. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Washington Office delivered the petitions to the appropriate congressional offices.

Mennonites are also supporting the Year 2000 Campaign, an international movement to redirect military spending to human development. It would include an arms transfer code of conduct for all countries that export arms. An initiative of Oscar Arias, 1987 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, the campaign hopes to direct world military spending to human need without reducing security.

Human security. MCC U.S. has joined some 45 other national religious and humanitarian groups in supporting the project in the United States. The campaign declares that the world is operating under an outdated definition of military security, one focusing on numbers and types of arms and the capacity to wage war. It's time to talk about "human security," the campaign says, that encompasses life without poverty, hunger, human rights abuses, and war.

While the developed nations, led by the United States, account for 75 percent of the world's military expenditures, developing countries today are spending some $221 billion yearly on armed forces. This amount represents a huge drain on these societies' abilities to provide for health, education, and other needs of their people.

The Year 2000 Campaign asks for dramatic cuts in military spending. It envisions countries implementing cuts in military spending by the year 2000.

—Daryl Byler

More than just hands. *Vilnius, Lithuania (EMM)*—Sharon Buckwalter works with a stroke patient at Lithuania's Vilnius University Hospital to increase his range of motion in preparation for standing.

Buckwalter recently completed a one-year intern-in-mission assignment in Lithuania with Eastern Mennonite Missions. With a degree in physical therapy, Buckwalter has always dreamed of using her skills in missions. During June, Buckwalter worked in Lithuania's capital city at the 1,000-bed Vilnius University Hospital. When hospital administrators discovered that neurological rehabilitation was Buckwalter's specialty, they began to ask her opinion and advice, especially with stroke and head-injury patients. Buckwalter found herself training other therapists about neurological patients.

"It really is a ministry of more than just my hands," says Buckwalter, who often shared her faith with other medical personnel. Buckwalter has been invited to return to Lithuania to work with the hospital to help them develop new rehabilitation services and train therapists throughout the country. Buckwalter will leave for a six-month assignment in October.

—Carol L. Wert

Good Enterprises files for bankruptcy protection

Intercourse, Pa.—Good Enterprises Ltd., which operates Good Books publishing house, *Festival Quarterly* magazine, and the People's Place Mennonite and Amish tourist information center, filed for bankruptcy protection on July 1 under Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy code.

A reorganization plan is currently being drafted for submission to creditors for approval. Phyllis Pellman Good, who began Good Enterprises with her husband, Merle, says that the next couple of months include figuring out a "careful way for assets to become cash for creditors."

The People's Place, art gallery, stores, and publishing house are continuing to operate, according to Pellman Good. She preferred not to comment on the future of *Festival Quarterly*, a magazine that explores Mennonite arts, faith, and culture.

Filing was necessary due to a drop in sales and changes in real estate transactions, according to Merle Good. Good Enterprises listed more that $7 million in debt. The company has assets of between $8 and $9 million and liabilities of between $7 and $8 million, according to the Lancaster *New Era*.

According to Pellman Good, Good Books has "cut its publishing program significantly," with plans to publish 2-6 books a year rather than the previous 25-35 titles. Pellman Good said they will continue active promotion of 200 backlist titles.

The Goods opened The People's Place in 1976 and Good Books in 1979.

General Conference mission boards highlight integration as key issue during fall meetings

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The boards of the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) and the Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) had integration at the top of their agendas during Sept. 13-14 meetings. COM and CHM are commissions of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Commission on Overseas Mission. COM heard reports about the prospects for integrating with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM). Twenty-one of COM's 139 workers are jointly appointed with MBM. In addition, Gregory Rake serves both mission agencies as the secretary for Latin America.

The executive committee took action to ask COM to work with MBM on drafting a common overseas personnel policy manual, which will be presented at the March 1997 Council of Commissions. A late October meeting is planned to discuss this issue as well as recruitment.

"While much remains to be done, a broad and deep level of trust has developed between COM and MBM," said chair Tom Lehman.

Executive secretary Glendon Klaassen noted that COM has mission workers in four new countries—Macau, Chile, Senegal, and Thailand—since last March. All these personnel were appointed in partnership with other Mennonite mission agencies. In some cases, there is also direct support from local and national churches in North America and overseas.

COM examined the *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement passed by the General Conference and the Mennonite Church. They agreed it would be good to look for ways to provide more spiritual nurture to missionaries. They also wondered if COM could collect prayers and stories from churches outside of North America for use in worship services here.

Commission on Home Ministries. The Commission on Home Ministries took action to recommend that the eventual integrated denominational structures of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church have a binational mission board.

The Mission Integration Committee asked CHM to respond to its study document. The current thinking continues to advocate regional mission centers through which all mission programs could be accessed. The regional centers would relate to a binational board or council.

By consensus, CHM members agreed that they prefer a binational mission board rather than a council, since the latter would have less authority. They also thought any national agenda could be dealt with in subgroups of the binational entity.

The commission heard reports about the process of integrating CHM's Mennonite Voluntary Service with the Voluntary Service program of MBM. Saul Murcia, MBM Voluntary Service coordinator, shared that the staff of the two service organizations work well together, and he is grateful for the trust that has been built. At the same time, he said, much work remains to be done.

Decisions about opening and closing units are now made together, reported Voluntary Service staff. In addition, they continue to work at integration of their budgets. Staff announced plans to have their two programs fully integrated by late 1997 or early 1998.

Some 150 pairs of underwear were made each summer for 20 years by Rhoda Palmer, a resident of The Mennonite Home of Albany (Ore.). Every fall, Palmer donated the fancy undergarments to social service agencies to be distributed to needy children. Palmer says she has fond childhood memories of church sewing circles in which women would gather to quilt and sew for relief. Then as a first-grade teacher in eastern Oregon, Palmer noticed that many of the children wore cheap, ill-made clothes and that few had decent underwear.

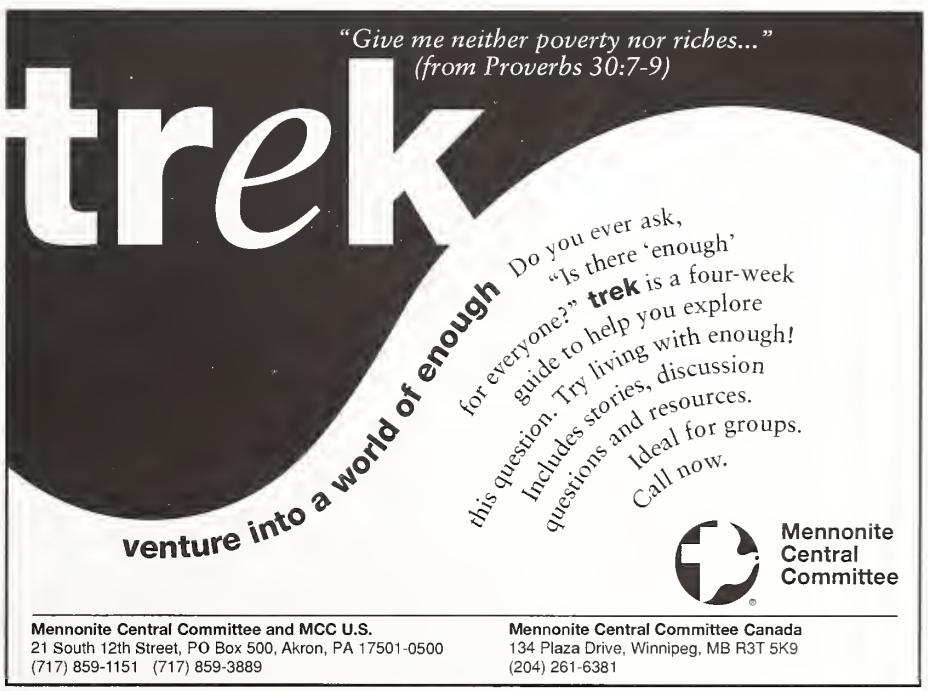
She's been sewing ever since—until now, that is. At age 86, Palmer has been fighting cataracts and pneumonia and has handed over the underwear-sewing tradition to her daughter, Linda Stinson. Stinson recently held an all-night party at her sewing store in Corvallis, Ore., in which 12 volunteers pieced together 100 pairs of underwear by sunrise. And just like her mother, Stinson is donating the panties to charities.

—*Associated Press*

"It was a cultural tragedy," says John Janzen, former director of the Kauffman Museum in North Newton, Kan., and currently anthropology professor at the University of Kansas. He's referring to the razing of the last 19th-century Mennonite adobe meetinghouse on the Great Plains. Bethel Mennonite Church built the structure near Inman in May 1890 and used it for seven years. It was later turned into a private residence. The building was razed in mid-August.

The church was built with three materials: limestone for the foundation, sun-dried mud bricks, and a wood-frame floor, window frames, and roof.

—*Mennonite Weekly Review*



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'Missionary kid' returns to close chapter in life

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—From 1967 to 1992, Michael and Mattie Marie Mast served among the Toba Indians in the northernmost part of Argentina. They raised four children during those years, and when they retired, they returned to the United States.

Now, after graduating from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., their son Marcello is returning to the region to come to terms with his childhood as a "missionary kid."

"Ever since I left five years ago, I've wanted to go back sometime," Mast said as he prepared to leave on a two-year assignment to Asunción, Paraguay.

Vision for adulthood. Going to the South American country as an overseas mission associate with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), Mast will serve as a teacher in the Asunción Christian Academy, where he graduated from high school in 1991. Asunción is very near the border between Argentina and Paraguay and is only a few hours from the region in which he grew up. Because of the proximity, Mast wants to visit the people among whom his parents worked for 25 years.

More than that, however, Mast hopes that this assignment will give him the opportunity to integrate his growing-up years into a vision for adulthood for himself. "I feel like I need to close that chapter of my life before I can figure out where I want to go from there," he said. "It's sort of a paradox.

• • •

I feel like I need to close that chapter of my life before I can figure out where I want to go from there.

—Marcello Mast

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When you're a kid, you can't choose where you live. Now that I'm not a kid, I'm choosing to go back to South America for awhile."

Mast acknowledges that sometimes when North American children grow up in a mission context, they end up rejecting the type of work their parents tried to do. He said that this may be because the children of mission workers don't have a choice in their living situation, coupled with the culture shock they experience when they come to the United States for higher education or when their parents retire from the mission field.

"I've never wanted to reject Argentina," he said. "Right now, I don't quite know how I feel about my childhood. That's one of the reasons I'm going back. Teaching at the school will give me the time I need to see how I feel about mission work, apart from the work my parents did my whole life."

As to the future, Mast is planning to take it all one day at a time as he discovers what and where his future will be. "It's hard to know what to expect," he said. "It's been so long since I've been there, but I believe this time will help me to figure out where to go from here."—*Christy Risser*

Environmental group will talk with church agencies

Newton, Kan. (GCMC-MC)—Members of the Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) Environmental Task Force reviewed its current projects, among other items, at a Sept. 21-22 meeting here.

The task force is working on a book project that includes the major addresses that were presented at the 1995 Creation Summit. The group also plans to talk with Mennonite institutions about their environmental policies and practices. Other projects include setting up an environmental discussion group on the Internet and posting environmental information on the denominational home pages.

The environmental task force commended Mennonite World Conference for endorsing the international petition that urges governments of industrialized countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000.

"What struck me about this meeting is the fact that this is a group of incredibly committed people who are working on a variety of enviromental issues," says Doug Krehbiel, director for peace and justice ministries for the GC Commission on Home Ministries (CHM). CHM and the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries both have staff representation on the Environmental Task Force.

- **MDS needs Spanish speakers.** Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) is looking for Spanish speakers with construction skills to assist in building in Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Hortense. Puerto Rican Mennonites and MDS organizers have decided to rebuild three wind-damaged houses between Aibonito and Coamo. Interested persons should contact Carla Hunt at 717 859-3889.

- **Glick wins peace contest.** Kathy Glick of Millersburg, Ohio, won first place in the 1996 C. Henry Smith Oratorical Contest. Glick, a sophomore communications major at Goshen (Ind.) College, received $250 for her speech, "Weaving Threads of Peace in a Pattern of War." Second place went to Andrew Horst, sophomore at Hesston (Kan.) College, and third place went to Melanie Grylls, a student at Swift Current (Sask.) Bible Institute. The annual contest is administered by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries.

- **New appointments:**

Jennifer Manley, director of student activities and adviser to the Black Student Union, Goshen (Ind.) College.

- **Coming events:**

MDS Region III annual meeting, Denver, Colo., Oct. 25-26. More information from 717 859-2210.

MDS Region V annual meeting, Regina, Sask., Oct. 26. More information from 717 859-2210.

Workshop on Anabaptist and Mennonite hymnology, Hesston (Kan.) College, Nov. 1-2. Ken Rodgers will lead three sessions on music from different time periods in Mennonite history. Second of three LEAD (Life Education and Development) weekend events at Hesston. Registration deadline is Oct. 28. More information from Cindi Roth at 316 327-8320.

- **New resources:**

Christmas Acappella, a new album released by The Table Singers, includes rarely recorded carols like "Star of the East" and "O Beautiful Star of Bethlehem." Features two carols by J. D. Brunk and one by Esther Musselman. Available from Harmonies, 717 656-6226.

- **Job openings:**

Coordinator and staff, Mennonite Society for the Aid of Children and Families, Edmonton, Alberta. A team of staff will live in close proximity of about 15 families at risk. Qualifications include skills in parenting, counselling, conflict resolution, and knowledge of domestic violence issues. Application deadline is Nov. 22; project begins January 1997. More information from Jim Shantz at 403 463-2699.

Director of computing services, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include supervision of six-member staff and oversight of all computer and network services to academic and administrative units. Qualifications include graduate degree. Send résumé and three professional references to John D. Nyce, interim academic dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526-4794.

Faculty position in biology, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Teaching and research experience preferred; doctorate required. Area of specialization: microbiology; area of competence: genetics or anatomy. Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts, and three references by Nov. 1 to William Hawk, vice president and academic dean, EMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Program director, adult degree completion program, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Qualifications include experience in management and administration and graduate degree in business or related area. Responsibilities include implementation and administration of program. Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts, and three references by Nov. 1 to William Hawk, vice president and academic dean, EMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Program representative, adult degree completion program, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Responsibilities include coordinating student recruitment, admissions, and financial affairs. Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts, and three references by Nov. 1 to William Hawk, vice president and academic dean, EMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Staff positions, Camp Buckeye, Beach City, Ohio. Opening for individual or couple with interest in maintenance and youth ministry. Housing provided. More information available from 330 756-2380.

Mirroring the martyrs. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—The Inquisitor (Matt Hunsberger, right) entreats Dirk Willems (Bob Brenneman, seated) to rescind his "heretical" views in a scene from "Dirk's Exodus," the fall mainstage production at Eastern Mennonite University. The play, written by James C. Juhnke, a history professor at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., is a dramatic presentation of the life of Dirk Willems, a Dutch martyr in the 16th-century Anabaptist movement. Imprisoned for his faith, Willems escaped over a frozen river, only to return and save his pursuer from drowning. He was subsequently burned at the stake in 1569. The two-act play, with music by composer J. Harold Moyer, was directed by Ingrid DeSanctis of EMU's theater department. It is based on a narrative in the *Martyrs Mirror,* a volume first published in 1660 by Tieleman J. van Braght.—*Jim Bishop*

BIRTHS

Clerico, Christina Kolb and Stephen, Spring City, Pa., Andrew Jon (first child), Sept. 27.

Cullar, Dawn Weber and Ken, North Lima, Ohio, Andrew Thomas (third child), Sept. 22.

Danker, Michelle Richard and John, Wayland, Iowa, Micah John (first child), Sept. 4.
Eigsti, Sara Swartzendruber and Calvin, Washington, D.C., Megan Elizabeth (first child), June 3.
Gingerich, Marge Springer and David, Wooster, Ohio, Jack Andrew (second child), June 12.
Hunsberger, Barbara Kane and Bryan, Schwenksville, Pa., Madeleine Christine (third child), born Aug. 26, received for adoption Aug. 28.
Jantzen, Alice Hartman and Mark, Notre Dame, Ind., Henry Peter (first child), Sept. 7.

MARRIAGES

Alleshouse-Miller: Brian Alleshouse, Orland, Ind. (Brighton Chapel), and JoAnn Miller, LaGrange, Ind. (Shore), Sept. 28, by George Youstra.
Amstutz-Swigonski: Robin Amstutz, Smithville, Ohio (Oak Grove), and Matt Swigonski, Burton, Ohio, Sept. 14, by Norma Duerksen.
Beachy-Buckwalter: Michael Beachy, Greenwood, Del. (Greenwood), and Darlene Buckwalter, Greenwood, Del. (Norma), Aug. 10, by Lowell Bechtel and Tim Schultz.
Blank-McMullen: Sharyn Dawn Blank, Christiana, Pa. (Media), and Edwin Lee McMullen Jr., Nottingham, Pa. (Media), Sept. 14, by H. Wesley Boyer.
Boland-Markley: Diane Boland, Harleysville, Pa. (Towamencin), and Bill Markley, Harleysville, Pa. (Towamencin), Sept. 28, by Steven C. Nyce.
Breneman-Smucker: Rick Breneman and Wendy Smucker, Smithville, Ohio (Oak Grove), July 6, by Bob Schloneger.
Chisenhall-Layton: Tammy Chisenhall, Greenwood, Del. (Tressler), and Karl Layton, Greenwood, Del. (Church of the Brethren), Aug. 25, by Lowell Bechtel.
Clemens-O'Brien: Quentin Clemens, Evanston, Ill. (Souderton), and Rachel O'Brien, Evanston, Ill. (Catholic), Sept. 20, by Robert and Margaret Richer Smith.
Cripe-Saunders: Ruth Anne Cripe, Goshen, Ind. (Waterford), and Wayne Saunders, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 26, by Del and Charlotte Holsopple Glick.

Conference educators meet. *Scottdale, Pa. (MPH)*—Lynn Williams (left) and Mary Weber (center), nurture representatives from Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, talk with Jenell Ulrich of Illinois Conference at a meeting of nurture and education commission representatives. Education leaders from eight Mennonite conferences met Sept. 27-29, at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, to share ideas, learn about Mennonite Publishing House resources, and discuss conference resource centers. These representatives discussed adult Christian education and reported a need for more helps and training for teachers of adults. Most of the groups reported they have started conference education resource centers within the past decade; a few said they want to begin centers soon.

Curler-Whitehead: Ken Curler, Phoenix, Ariz. (Sunnyslope), and Kim Whitehead, Phoenix, Ariz. (Sunnyslope), Sept. 28, by Dennis Stauffer.
Dick-Leaman: Juli Dick, Mountain Lake, Minn. (Mennonite Brethren), and Matthew Leaman, Lincoln University, Pa. (Frazer), Sept. 21, by Calvin Shenk (uncle of the groom).
Emery-Socia: Erik Emery, Fairview, Mich. (Fairview), and Kimberly Socia, Fairview, Mich. (Fairview), Sept. 28, by Virgil Hershberger.
Frey-Troyer: Dayton J. Frey, Goshen, Ind. (Pleasant View), and Gayle Lorraine Troyer, Elkhart, Ind. (Belmont), Aug. 17, by Duane Beck.
Gaessler-Scott: Graham Gaessler, Waterloo, Ont. (Evangelical Missionary), and Bridget Scott, Greenwood, Del. (Tressler), Aug. 31, by Phil Delsaut.
Gingerich-Rudy: Donna Gingerich, Elmira, Ont. (Zion), and Mark Rudy, Elmira, Ont. (Wilmot), July 27, by Marilyn Rudy Froese.
Grass-Mast: Marty Grass, Goshen, Ind. (Pleasant View), and Dennis Mast, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 14, by Ron Diener, John Troyer, and Bob Brenneman.
Hochstedler-Stahly: Troy Hochstedler, Bristol, Ind. (Pleasant View), and Shari Stahly, Bristol, Ind. (Pleasant View), Aug. 31, by Ronald Diener.

DEATHS

Leatherman, Howard D., 75, Plumsteadville, Pa. Born: July 25, 1921, Bedminster Twp., Pa., to John G. and Mary Derstine Leatherman. Died: Sept. 15, 1996, Doylestown, Pa., of pneumonia. Survivors—wife: Margaret Yothers Leatherman; children: Margaret Troyer, Mary Ruth Derstine, Joanne Ruth, Geraldine Schmidt, Bruce, Daniel, Richard, John Paul, Dean, Duane; brothers and sisters: Wilson, Richard, Earl, Margaret Myers, Marie Hange, Reda Litzenberger, Della Gross; 25 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Sept. 19, Deep Run Mennonite Church East, by Timothy D. Weaver, Arnold C. Roth, and Mark Baumgardner.
Oswald, Alica Ann Schrock, 69, Albany, Ore. Born: Sept. 11, 1927, Albany, Ore., to William and Mary Steckley Schrock. Died: Sept. 13, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—children: Walter, David, Anita Snider, Mary Alice Trammel; brother and sister: Marvin Schrock, Lillian Kenagy; 6 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Robert Oswald (husband). Funeral and burial: Sept. 20, Fairview Mennonite Church, by Roy Hostetler and Al Burkey.
Pletcher, Harriet Marie, 77, Goshen, Ind. Born: Aug. 23, 1918, Middlebury, Ind. Died: Aug. 14, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—brother and sister: Kenneth, Edith. Congregational membership: Pleasant View Mennonite Church. Funeral: Aug. 18, Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, by Ron Diener and John Troyer. Burial: Yellow Creek Mennonite Church Cemetery.
Rice, Edna, 86, Souderton, Pa. Born: Oct. 16, 1909, to Ervin Y. and Sallie Gehman Rice. Died: Sept. 4, 1996, Souderton, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—brother and sisters: Howard G., Sara G. Moyer, Mary G. Landis. Funeral: Sept. 8, Souderton Mennonite Home Chapel, by Arnold C. Roth. Burial: Deep Run Mennonite Church East Cemetery.
Schlabach, Vivian Johns, 93, Goshen, Ind. Born: Jan. 3, 1903, Goshen, Ind., to Ira and Elizabeth Rickert Johns. Died: Sept. 12, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—children: Ruth Shaum, Richard, Dorvin, Theron, Eudean Broni, Dale, Areta Kilmer; brother and sisters: Galen, Vesta Kauffman, Mary Berkey, Pauline Horst; 17 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ezra Schlabach (husband). Funeral: Sept. 16, Benton Mennonite Church, by Brenda Meyer,

Jim Chupp, and Galen Johns. Burial: Benton Lutheran Cemetery.

Schmucker, Joseph D., 75, Apple Creek, Ohio. Born: Nov. 20, 1920, Wolford, N.D., to Andrew and Katie Ann Gingerich Schmucker. Died: Sept. 20, 1996, Apple Creek, Ohio, of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Emma Slabaugh Swartzentruber Schmucker; children: Katie Rowe, Mary Alice Yoder, Shirley Ann Gerber, stepchildren: Walter Swartzentruber, Anna K. King, Donna M. Miller, Dorothy Hershberger, Ruth E. Nussbaum, Norma J. Kirchner, Elizabeth J. Cooper; brothers and sisters: Abe, Elmer; half brothers and sister: Nathaniel E., Joni E., Adam E., David E., and Milo E. Hershberger, Katie Miller; stepbrothers and stepsisters: Levi E., Sam E., Eli E., and Henry E. Hershberger, Mary Miller, Barbara E. Hershberger, Rebecca Schrock, Sarah Hostetler; 7 grandchildren, 17 stepgrandchildren, 10 stepgreat-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Sarah Stutzman Schmucker (first wife) and Henry (son). Funeral: Sept. 24, Martins Mennonite Church, by Randy Murray and Homer Kandel. Burial: Gray Ridge Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Shank, Nancy Eva, 89, Stouffville, Ont. Born: May 11, 1907, Markham Twp., Ont., to William and Mary Byer Shank. Died: Aug. 31, 1996, Stouffville, Ont. Funeral: Sept. 4, Wideman Mennonite Church, by Lawrence E. Burkholder. Burial: Byer Cemetery.

Smith, Dode M., 87, West Liberty, Ohio. Born: Oct. 26, 1908, Ohio City, Ohio, to Fred and Nellie Spahr Smith. Died: Sept. 26, 1996. Survivors—wife: Mary Vaughn Yoder Smith; sister: Glee Smith. Predeceased by: Kathryn Ann Smith (daughter). Funeral: Sept. 30, South Union Mennonite Church, by Randy Reminder and Elmer Neufeld.

Spencer, Louise "Ruth," Bedford Heights, Ohio. Died: Sept. 11, 1996, Bedford, Ohio. Survivors—sons: Kenneth R., Charles E., Calvin R.; 5 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Russell K. Spencer (husband). Congregational membership: Friendship Mennonite Church. Funeral: Sept. 14, Johnson Romito Funeral Home, by Leo J. Miller and David Orr. Burial: Hillcrest Memorial Park.

Stutzman, Clarence D., 88, Wood River, Neb. Born: May 1, 1908, Milford, Neb., to Abraham and Sarah Miller Stutzman. Died: Sept. 19, 1996, Wood River, Neb. Survivors—wife: Ethel Jantzi Stutzman; children: Paul, Ralph, Loretta Boshart, Thelma Stutzman, Merna Boshart, Phyllis Bauman; siblings: Florence Schweitzer, Arla; 17 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by an infant daughter. Funeral and burial: Sept. 23, Wood River Mennonite Church, by Denton R. Jantzi and Michael Stutzman (grandson).

Teuscher, Lydia Shetler, 84. Born: May 17, 1912, Pigeon, Mich., to Joseph and Anna Hochstetler Shetler. Died: Sept. 19, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—children: Carol Teuscher Beachy, Wilma, Ruth Rice, Marjorie, Patricia Gascho, Wayne; brother and sisters: Daniel Shetler, Mary Boller, Agnes Swartzendruber. Predeceased by: Harry W. Teuscher (husband). Funeral and burial: Sept. 24, Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, by Luke Yoder and Melvin Leidig.

Thomas, Harley L., 54, Johnstown, Pa. Born: Sept. 18, 1942, Jenner Twp., Pa., to Freeman and Fannie Kaufman Thomas. Died: Oct. 6, 1996, Johnstown, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Maretta Kaltenbaugh Thomas; sons: Arlan, Shane; brother and sisters: Floyd, Ethel Dorsey, Grace Stayrook; stepmother: Cora Hostetler Thomas; one grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 8, Henderson Funeral Home, by Richard Mininger. Burial: Blough Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Troyer, Grace E. Smucker, 93, Smithville, Ohio. Born: July 25, 1903, Smithville, Ohio, to Noah and Kate Gerig Smucker. Died: Aug. 28, 1996, Smithville, Ohio. Survivors—children: Mary Jean, Willis, James, Charles; 6 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Abner J. Troyer (husband). Funeral and burial: Sept. 2, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, by Norma Duerksen.

Yeackley, Orvin, 85, Milford, Neb. Born: June 9, 1911, Milford, Neb., to Fred and Lydia Saltzman Yeackley. Died: Oct. 4, 1996, Milford, Neb. Survivors—children: Edna Miller, Myrna Roth, Keith; brother: Ray; 9 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elsie Schweitzer Yeackley (wife) and Arlene Schweitzer (daughter). Funeral and burial: Oct. 8, East Fairview Mennonite Church, by William J. Saltzman and Lloyd Gingerich.

Yoder, Rose Marie, 47, Sarasota, Fla. Born: May 21, 1949, Hicksville, Ohio, to Sam and Leah Delagrange Yoder. Died: Sept. 25, 1996, Fort Myers, Fla. Survivors—brother and sisters: James, Jean Yoder, Bonnie Percival, Evelyn Inlow. Congregational membership: Bahia Vista Mennonite Church. Funeral: Sept. 29, Central Mennonite Church, by Don Delagrange.

Sharing stories in Benin. *Cotonou, Benin (MBM)*—Alphonse Godonou (left), a student in an Aug. 2-10 course on the Bible's prophetic books, talks with retired Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) worker David A. Shank, teacher of the course. The Bible seminar, under the direction of MBM worker Rodney Hollinger-Janzen, meets for one week every six weeks to bring together African Independent Church pastors who have no other recourse for systematic Bible training. Godonou travels four hours from the remote village in southcentral Benin where he serves as pastor in the Universal Evangelical Church. Shank, of Sturgis, Mich., served in Benin from 1984-1989.

During his most recent trip to West Africa, David Shank also spoke to delegates from 18 African nations at a conference in Burkina Faso. "The current, severe crisis in Africa is overshadowed by the rapid shift of the center of global Christianity away from the West to the South, with you at its very heart," Shank said to the 300 participants.

Shank also taught a course in Cote d'Ivoire during a summer program for leaders in eight French-speaking countries.

Newspaper

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So who wants to be a martyr?

I always hoped I'd never have to print an article like Jim Brenneman's (page 1). But I also knew that someday I would.

That realization came from sitting in Sunday school class after Sunday school class talking about witnessing and church growth. Eventually the talk always comes around to the fact that comfortable North American churches aren't growing while persecuted churches in other countries are.

"Does that mean we should seek persecution?" someone asks. "No," we all agree, "but . . . " And there the conversation ends.

But the conversation must continue. At stake is no less than the salvation of both the individual and the church.

Brenneman's assertions are clear but uncomfortable: the persecuted church is a growing church. Today we in North America are neither. True, Vision 95 brought a relatively respectable 11 percent growth for the Mennonite Church, but that's nowhere near the 100 percent or even 200 percent being experienced in parts of the world where to be a Christian is to risk all, even one's life.

Can a faithful church not be a persecuted church? The conversation does not have to stop when we ask that question. There are steps we can take toward an answer:

1. Admit we have a problem. North American Mennonites tend to operate as though we have it all together, as though we know what being faithful is all about. Yet, as Brenneman notes, for all our education and our posturing, we still don't know how to reach out effectively. For too many of us, witnessing is arguing about the best way to do so.

Brenneman is not easy reading. No one likes being called a "flaccid whiner." Yet honesty demands that we admit he is telling the truth.

2. Seek outside help. Study conferences and surveys are not going to solve this one. The problem is too close to us. We're too good at rationalizing our behavior and excusing ourselves to find our own solution.

We must look for help elsewhere. We could turn to those among us who have been persecuted and oppressed. The African-American church, for example, not only survived in the United States during the evil days of slavery. It grew and flourished, today influencing all churches with music and worship styles.

We could ask for help from the church in other cultures. Brenneman notes the rapid growth of the church in Ethiopia during its days of persecution. Something similar is happening in places like China today.

3. Get our priorities straight. The mission of the church is not to draw boundaries and erect fences—or even to defend a tradition—all of which seem to be occupying our time as Mennonites these days. Our mission is to announce the good news of freedom through Jesus Christ —forgiving even those we hate (Brenneman, page 1), living and proclaiming peace and reconciliation (Kraus, page 6). And, like Jesus, we are called to stand alongside the poor, the dispossessed, and the outcasts.

4. Ask the faithfulness question. How do we "stand alongside"? Some of us have answered by withholding our war taxes. Others have joined Christian Peacemaker Teams. Some sell or give away their possessions and live in community. Others go into dangerous parts of the world and attempt reconciliation.

Yet these are mainly individual acts. For the most part, we as a total church have not been able to agree even on these relatively simple attempts toward faithfulness.

Can a non-persecuted, comfortable church also be a growing, faithful church? The record has not been good. In Mennonite history, we have the examples of churches in Russia and Europe, where, as Christians grew wealthy and accepted, their message became diluted and weak. Even in the New Testament we read much more about the "mission outposts" that were being questioned and oppressed than we do about the more wealthy and better-accepted mother church in Jerusalem.

A faithful church that's not persecuted? God just may be giving North American Mennonites another chance to see if that's possible. We are the best-read, most-educated, and probably the wealthiest Mennonites who ever lived. Can we catch a vision to channel that knowledge and wealth into living and proclaiming the gospel rather than in spending the majority of it on ourselves?

That is the real question that faces us today, not whether we will be persecuted. I, for one, don't want to be a martyr; but I do want to be faithful.—*jlp*

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Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

The Christian's evangelical witness in the world depends largely on how well our economic life is guided and affirmed by the congregation where we worship.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

'Mennobytes' by Jonathan Beachy:
Learning to know the face of Mennonite mammon 5

Ray Bowman with Eddy Hall:
Freeing your church from the beg, borrow, and steal syndrome . . . 6

Integrating women's groups propose two national boards 9

MCC considers identity in light of shrinking funds 12

The church confronts pagan economics:

My business is your business

The Christian message has a powerful claim on the economic behavior of believers. This must translate into practice by way of the local congregation.

by Calvin Redekop

Most of us do not know much, if anything, about the economic lives of the members in our congregation. We hear through the grapevine or read in the papers when someone has been implicated in questionable business dealings, when someone has lost a job, or when a church member declares bankruptcy. In fact, most of us assume that our business dealings are no one else's business. Banks, secular business associates, and colleagues know more about the economic and business affairs of our fellow church members than we do.

A century ago, especially among rural Mennonites, members knew about the economic lives of one another, and there was considerable oversight and counsel given in economic activities. Persons involved in unethical practices were admonished and in extreme cases were excommunicated.

But in the latter 20th century, no Mennonite confession of faith has a clear admonition regarding the role of the congregation in econom-

ic life, including affluence and lifestyle. The economic life simply pursues its own direction.

Today, Mennonite society, along with the rest of Western Christianity, has allowed economy and business activity to become an autonomous realm—of little or no concern to the local congregation. Mennonite church life has become pietistic and subjective. We engage in wonderfully rich and inspirational worship events. We experience strong affirmation of our commitment to the teachings of the church through good preaching. And we are deeply concerned about our lack of evangelistic success. But on economic matters? Silence.

What has happened to bring us to this lamentable condition? The one-word answer is a new paganism named individualism. According to Robert Bellah, "Individualism lies at the heart of American culture."

On the basis of a survey of research on Mennonite society, Stephen Ainlay states unequivocally, "Individualism has indeed made deep inroads into the Mennonite consciousness." Individualism is a condition in which one's own will and mind are the source of morals, ethics, values, and ideals as well as the resulting behavior and lifestyle. There is no objective authority in the world outside the individual.

What is the cause for this modern Mennonite individualism? Ainlay answers that "the social experience of contemporary Mennonites is conducive to modern individualism." In other words, Mennonite integration into the modern world—spatially, economically, educationally, professionally, and socially—has made us all individualists. Ainlay believes that individualism has "resulted in decreased attachment and commitment to the Mennonite community and a corresponding increase in people's desire to advance their self-interests."

The ways the early church confronted paganism have relevance for us as we deal with the new paganism among us. One of these is recorded in Acts 4:32-5:12. The whole body of believers was united in heart and soul. For instance, Joseph, surnamed by the apostles' Barnabas, owned an estate, which he sold: he brought the money and laid it at the apostles feet. But there was another man, called Ananias, with his wife, Sapphira, who sold a property. With the full knowledge of his wife, Ananias kept back part of the money; part he brought and laid at the apostles' feet. We know the story—Peter confronted him, and he died.

The traditional interpretations of the significance of this event include lying to God and the congregation, selfishness, the lack of integrity, and the lack of stewardship. I do not challenge these. But a more subtle and basic message is inherent as well: *the apostles and congregation were fully aware of the status of their members*. The apostles and the congregation knew about the commitments of members, they confronted those who deviated from their commitments, and they disciplined deviant members.

In other words, the congregation functioned as a moral and ethical compass for members. This episode teaches us that the Christian church was as concerned about inner paganism

As Christians we must reject the rampant individualism of our age and accept the help of the church in becoming Christ's disciples in our economic life.

as it was about accepting pagan converts. Scripture allocates as much attention to the business and economic life as to any other topic. The Old Testament, beginning with the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, proclaims respect for the rights of others regarding property and wealth (don't steal); the role and limitations of working for material gain (reserve one day of the week for rest and worship); and honesty and integrity in business dealings (don't bear false witness or covet). Indeed, the Ten Commandments are more of an economic labor charter than commonly recognized.

The rest of the Old Testament bursts with teachings on economic life. Copiously outlined in the Old Testament are instructions for paying of debts, helping the poor in the community with jobs or basic needs, dealing with unlawful or unfair acquisition of land and property, handing down possessions to the next generation, and paying fair wages.

Turning to the New Testament, Willard Swartley says, "Jesus spoke many times more often about economic matters than he did about prayer." In fact, Jesus' teachings and life portrayed in the Gospels are so stringent regarding economics that many scholars and lay people have dismissed him, saying he never fed a family or met a payroll. Some say he lived in a pre-capitalist age and hence had little to say about our business and economic activities.

The New Testament epistles are no less emphatic about economic issues. The teachings and admonitions are almost endless. For example, Paul says clearly church members should not go to court over business matters with other members, and he suggests that the local congregation has a role to play in such disputes.

The Christian message has a powerful claim on the economic behavior of its members. This must translate into practice by way of the congregation. Christians' evangelical witness in the world depends largely on how well economic life is guided and affirmed by the congregation.

How can we achieve the early church's model for Christian witness in the world of economic and business life?

1. We must accept the theology that the congregation has a central role to play in judging the economic, professional, and business lives of members. If we do not accept the biblical model, then there is no point assuming that the economic life is a part of the Christian message and witness. Making a living and taking care of material needs, which occupies most of our waking hours, is an important arena of witness, one in which we need the guidance of our fellow believers.

2. We must make the congregation the locus of discernment for critical issues. We must counsel together as to which vocations, occupations, and businesses we can be involved in that witness to Christ's way. We must accept the congregation's help in discerning and judging pagan economics by participating in groups and organizations that give us counsel in our economic lives, such as Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). We can participate in small groups and Sunday school classes in which personal economic and business issues are candidly discussed and evaluated. We can attend public events that deal with the economic side of life.

In his book, *The Clashing World of Economics and Faith*, James Halteman says, "Given the present prevailing view that one's financial business is a private affair, some may find it hard to imagine how mutual accountability can be part of the Christian agenda. Yet the more closely a body of believers models the teachings of 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, the more feasible the prospect of mutual accountability in financial matters becomes."

3. We need to confront and intercede when members get into serious conflict situations, rather than waiting to read of a lawsuit or bankruptcy in the local paper.

To say that the community of faith is the basic unit for Christian action means that the church gives its blessing to the behavior of its members in specific ways. It also means that behavior inconsistent with the expectations of the fellowship of believers is dealt with. This includes the economic behavior of the church's members.

The structures to help the congregation become the center of economic life are already there. Now we need to reject the rampant individualism of our age and accept the help of the congregation in becoming Christ's disciples.

Calvin Redekop is an independent scholar long concerned about how economics affect religion. He and his son, Ben, recently edited the book, Entrepreneurs in the Faith Community *(Herald Press, 1996). This article is adapted from a sermon he preached at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., this past July.*

I've appreciated the series, "My Vision for the Mennonite Church." But I have one objection. Judging from the job descriptions, all the writers are at least 30 years old. Are you planning to have any vision from the younger generation in the church?

Lyle Beidler
State College, Pa.

Congregations That Continue the Good Work Already Begun (Oct. 1). I appreciated Wayne Speigle's vision statement in this series. Toward those who have made choices inconsistent with the life and teachings of Christ, Speigle reflects both the compassionate, inviting posture and the call to wholeness and transforming holiness that I see in Jesus.

Joe N. Sherer
Mount Joy, Pa.

Since I am no longer a member of the Mennonite Church, it seems impolite to quarrel with the fathers in the pages of *Gospel Herald*. However, since Theron Schlabach, in his "Readers Say" letter (Sept. 10), invited dialogue around his desire for church discipline, a few observations:

Schlabach's contention that "the purpose of true discipline is to christianize that person and others" simply replaces a moral and spiritual imperialism of the Constantinian variety with an imperialism of an Anabaptist variety. Since in neo-Anabaptism the great message of justification by faith has been replaced by an ethos of salvation by belief and behavior—especially behavior (ethics)—it is now necessary for church discipline to insure and underwrite a proper salvation.

Normative Anabaptist historians and theologians, in their desire to discipline, seem to unconsciously wrap themselves in the conservative frocks of the departed bishops whom they often criticize. Truly, the bishops has been replaced by a new era of Anabaptist scholars who now serve as the earnest gatekeepers to the kingdom.

Those of us who are pastors observe that Anabaptist congregations are much more gracious and generous about the limits of human perfection than the scholarly members of the Anabaptist guild. The utopian, textual communities of Anabaptist scholars are being taken less and less seriously by those believers who live in real communities of cultural plurality and moral ambiguity. It is this blessed fallen peoplehood that is reminding us all that we are saved by grace through faith, that it is a gift of God, lest any man should boast.

Scott Holland
Monroeville, Pa.

Who's to Go: Liberals or Conservatives? (Oct. 1). Here's what Jesus said about getting along in the church and loving each other: "Ye are my disciples if ye have love one for another. . . . I command that ye love one another. . . . Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me."

Mrs. Paul M. Stutzman
Massillon, Ohio

Until last summer, I thought your magazine was just for adults. I expected to yawn my way through any issue, so I never bothered to pick one up.

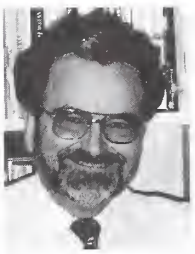
When I finally did read an issue last summer, I was shocked at how interesting it was. True, *Gospel Herald* is not written to appeal mostly to teenagers, but I've come to the conclusion that your magazine is for anyone who wants to broaden their knowledge of God and the Mennonite church.

Megan Kraybill (15)
Lancaster, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle

***Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread; . . . but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.*—Ps. 1:1-2, NRSV**

Gospel Herald



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Learning to know the face of Mennonite mammon

Could it be the self-respect that grows out of our service experiences becomes a form of ethnocentrism—making us "answer people" with obvious solutions but without the need to listen and learn?

by Jonathan Beachy

"Jet skis, high-powered and expensive cars, cellular phones, more than $4,500 in phone bills when my girlfriend was out of the country for two months, women hanging onto me wherever I go—I've tried it all, and there is nothing in it. It's all empty. Why go on living? I even asked God for an oil slick on the road to crash my car since I was too chicken to run into a tree on my own."

The speaker was not an executive but a 19-year-old son of mammon who trusted his high school counselor enough to share his despair.

As Mennonites, most of us learned that mammon is a fearful enemy, and so it is. Given its evasive quality, our abundance is extremely powerful. But after many years of trying to understand attitudes of superiority, ethnocentrism, and the need to change people's ways of thinking to parallel my own, a new light suddenly shone in my darkness.

Could it be the "wealth" most Mennonites face is not described in the first paragraph? Might our self-respect and pride that grow out of our service experiences actually become a form of ethnocentrism—of being "answer people" with the obvious solutions without the need to listen and learn?

Mennonites are service-oriented: Mennonite Central Committee, Voluntary Service, and Mennonite Disaster Service have been in our vocabulary for decades. But without exception, our service has been to the downtrodden, those who suffer injustice, the oppressed, the victims of natural disasters. This is good and right. We have learned about the powerless and have worked as channels of redemption and integral wholeness for them; sometimes we even try to talk to the power wielders.

Perhaps our own brokenness—and perhaps a reinforcement through our service experience—has confirmed to us that because we have something good and valid to offer, we are "one step up." Self-respect and healthy pride are necessary parts of emotional well-being, but is it possible that what is valid may be distorted? This attitude is too often an unrecognized and subtle enemy in relationships with others, especially with those who are culturally or ethnically different.

A variety of orientation programs for service and mission workers and seminary students have taken students to the "Big City," to those thought to be at the "bottom of the ladder," to those who may have "nothing to offer." What are we saying or reinforcing with that experience? What message are we conveying to our youth and would-be pastors and teachers?

I became conscious of these issues through the juxtaposition of two encounters. The first occurred when I spoke with that 19-year-old to whom I could offer absolutely nothing material—no self-help program to get ahead, no self-determination initiative to "turn his fortune."

My second encounter was with a 20-year-old college student who had recently gone through a service orientation and who now realizes that far too much of what he has to offer others is exactly what much of his generation cynically rejects, such as self-worth related to materialism and lifestyle.

What would happen if we made friends, not with mammon, but with its children? They may even be our own! If we became trusted friends of persons to whom we can offer absolutely nothing other than relationship with God and ourselves, might we discover the true essence of life?

Might we possibly, for the first time, not only recognize how much we honor mammon but also ask ourselves what other subtle faces it wears to which we also render homage? Might we find some of the handles for becoming free from our opulence, to offer only ourselves, our friendship, and a God who transcends culture and provincialism? It could happen.

Jonathan Beachy is a fifth-term Mennonite Central Committee worker in Paraguay.

Freeing your church from the beg,

Most of us have seen our pastors beg for money so often that we think nothing of it. We have come to accept as normal putting debt payments ahead of ministry.

by Ray Bowman with Eddy Hall

As my wife, Sally, and I entered the 3,500-seat sanctuary, the warm voices of gathering worshipers welcomed us. Sparkling Christmas trees, graceful garlands, and the cheerful clamor of the orchestra tuning up heightened our anticipation.

Though we were visitors, we knew the music at this church was always excellent. This was Christmas Sunday; today the music would be extraordinary. The pastor, we knew, was one of the best preachers around.

Sure enough, the congregational singing, the prayer time, and the special music all invited us to worship. But then something happened that I won't soon forget. The pastor stepped to the pulpit and announced that by the following Sunday, the church had to raise over $100,000 for its end-of-the-year mortgage payment. Then he went on to make a long appeal for funds.

His appeal was as gracious as anyone could have made it. But by the time it was over our focus was no longer on the Christ child; it was on paying the bills. The pastor went on to preach an excellent sermon, but I couldn't enjoy it. The long interruption for fundraising had destroyed the spirit of worship. And the members didn't welcome the appeal any more than we did as visitors. They had long since grown tired of almost every Sunday sitting through yet another request to pay off the debt.

But of all the people there, the one who most abhorred what happened that morning was the pastor. Every week he was forced to take on the thankless task of begging people to pay a debt far more massive than the church could reasonably bear. He later told me, "The burden of debt is so heavy, sometimes I don't think I'll survive."

This church, though certainly not by design, had fallen into a pattern of begging, borrowing, and "stealing." The pastor was forced to beg because of the church's extensive borrowing. To make debt payments, the church was having to steal funds needed for ministry. And I was partly to blame.

Twenty years earlier this church had hired me to design their building. They had borrowed heavily for the building and I had cheered them on. In fact, as a church architect, I had become something of an expert at persuading hesitant church leaders to borrow to the max and showing them how to do it.

This church had bought wholesale into the borrow-and-build thinking that I so enthusiastically advocated. They had borrowed for various projects, each time expecting it to bring growth, but they had been repeatedly disappointed. And now paying the debt had to come first, even when that meant using funds urgently needed for ministry.

For most of my life, I had considered all this normal. I had seen pastors beg for money so often that I thought nothing of it. I was so used to churches putting debt payments ahead of ministry that I had accepted it as the way things had to be. And, of course, had I not only seen church borrowing as normal; I had enthusiastically promoted it.

Then I changed jobs. I became a consultant helping churches coordinate planning of facilities, finances, and ministries. No longer was my focus on building church buildings; it was on building churches.

Through working with scores of churches on their finances—some thriving, others fighting for their financial lives—I learned that the beg, borrow, and steal syndrome is not only widespread, but it is also curable. Pastors don't have to beg, congregations don't have to borrow, and churches don't have to steal funds from ministry to pay for institutional maintenance. Though the process is neither quick nor easy, a financially burdened church can replace indebtedness with provision, institutionalism with purpose, and insufficiency with plenty.

From indebtedness to provision. Early on in my consulting, I noticed a pattern: The more debt a church had in relation to its income, the less financial freedom for ministry it tended to have. What would happen, I wondered, if churches built debt-free—living within the income God provided—and used the saved interest for ministry?

Next I realized that most of the churches asking me for building advice didn't need to build at all; they had better alternatives. I began helping churches devise creative ways to get more out of their facilities. While each situation was unique, some solutions proved useful in many churches.

borrow, and steal syndrome

• *Move classes to the right size rooms.* Moving large classes to large rooms and small classes to small rooms gave larger classes room to keep growing.

• *Replace pews with chairs.* Good church chairs are not cheap, but they cost far less than building. By replacing pews with chairs, some churches made their largest single space, the worship area, useful for a variety of ministries seven days a week.

• *Build a storage shed.* If rooms were used as storage closets, they could be freed up by building a low-cost storage building.

• *Add a fellowship foyer.* For a growing church to get out of debt and stay out of debt, it must sometimes hold multiple worship services. To make this practical, some churches added a fellowship foyer big enough so that those leaving one service had room to visit with those arriving for the next.

Using these and other innovations, some congregations have been able to grow to two or three times the size for which their buildings were originally designed without needing a major building program. Then when they have built, by building intensive multiple-use facilities, they have cut the number of square feet needed by half or more.

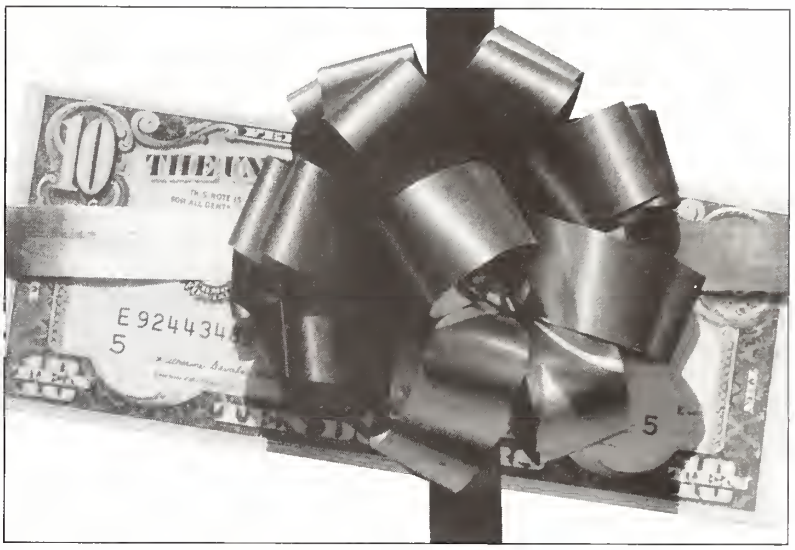
By avoiding interest and building multiple-use buildings, some churches have saved 50 to 75 percent of their construction costs. This is money they could then use for the real work of the church, meeting people's needs in the name of Christ.

From institutionalism to purpose. I've read scores of church mission statements, and I haven't read a bad one yet. Every church has good intentions. But the church, like any other organization, can get caught up in pouring most of its time, money, and energy into maintaining its own structures and programs to the point that its mission gets little more than lip service.

One way to gauge your church's true priorities is to go through your church budget line by line, assigning each dollar of spending to one of six categories. Three of these categories—facilities, staff, and operations—pay for maintaining church structures and ministry programs. The other three are for sharing—money the church gives away to meet the needs of people outside the community, people in the community, and people within the church.

How does your church's spending on maintenance and ministry (facility, staff, and operations) compare with its spending on sharing? A church that spends freely on itself while giving far less to others may be driven more by institutionalism than by a sense of mission.

Is spending among the three sharing categories balanced? Giving to world missions is important, but it is no substitute for personal involvement in ministry to people in need right on your doorstep. For every dollar given to world missions, I urge churches to also earmark



a dollar to meet needs within their own communities and, even more important, a dollar for financial needs of people within the church. The Bible says we don't have God's love in us if we neglect the needs of our own spiritual family (1 John 3:17).

When a church reduces the proportion of its budget spent on facilities and staff, when it increases spending for sharing and outreach, when it moves toward the goal of devoting one-third of all staff time, facility use, and operations spending to ministries of intentional outreach, that church is on its way from institutionalism to purpose. It is learning to put its money where its mission statement is.

From insufficiency to plenty. A non-growing church doesn't need much money. If the people give the church 3 percent of their income, that is plenty to keep it going. But for a church to sustain modest growth, the people need to give an average of 5 to 6 percent of their income. Sustaining church growth of 10 percent a year or more requires a giving level of 8 to 12 percent. Why? Because it

(continued on page 8)

Famous theologian and author Henri Nouwen dies

Henri J. M. Nouwen, an internationally known Roman Catholic theologian and author, died on Sept. 21 in Hilversum, Netherlands, at 64. Nouwen died from a heart attack, according to a statement from L'Arche Daybreak Community in Toronto, where Nouwen had lived as a pastor since 1985, devoting himself to people with developmental disabilities.

Born in the Netherlands in 1932, Nouwen wrote more than 30 books on the Christian life, including *The Wounded Healer* and *Our Greatest Gift.*

—*Christian Century*

Canadians who attend church or religious services most generous

Those who attend church or religious services weekly are almost three times as likely to donate to the poor overseas as those who never attend. That's according to a Canadian survey of the relation between charity and religious beliefs. Those who attend services either weekly or monthly make up only one-third of the Canadian population, but they account for more than half of those who contribute to overseas relief. The survey also revealed that those who attend worship regularly are more likely to volunteer their services to community organizations. Half of regular church attenders do voluntary work, compared to one-third of those who never attend services and 39 percent of occasional attenders.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Meeting of 1,000 women demands full access to church ministries

The first European Women's Synod, held in Gmunden, Austria, has demanded women's full participation in decision-making processes in religious and secular institutions. They asked for access to all church ministries, including priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. "We give priority to opposing the systematic exclusion of women from positions of authority in church and society," delegates said. More than 1,000 women from 45 countries attended the first ecumenical European women's assembly, under the title of "Women's Power Changing the 21st Century," held on July 21-28. They dealt with many issues, including politics, economics, spirituality, and personal development.

—*Mennonite World Conference*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer exonerated of charge of high treason

A Berlin court has ruled that Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Protestant theologian executed in 1945 for his resistance to Adolf Hitler, was innocent of high treason. Bonhoeffer was executed on that charge in the closing days of World War II. Although he had been arrested in 1943, before the July bomb plot to assassinate Hitler in 1944, Bonhoeffer was linked to the chief conspirators.

The court ruling follows a campaign by theologians and theological students for the official rehabilitation of Bonhoeffer. He played a significant role in the ecumenical movement in the interwar years and was in charge of an unofficial, later illegal, seminary.—*Christian Century*

Freeing your church from the beg, borrow, and steal syndrome

(continued from page 7)

takes money to operate ministries of outreach. It takes money to add staff. It takes money to adapt or build facilities. It takes money to sustain growth.

How can people be inspired to give at this level? A generation ago, institutional loyalty motivated much church giving. Today many seem to be far less likely to give out of institutional loyalty than their parents and grandparents were. The secret to inspiring people to give generously, even sacrificially, in today's church is to invite them to give, not to an institution, but to a vision.

One pastor explains his church's approach this way: "We don't say, 'We need this amount of money.' We say, 'This is the ministry God is calling us to do, and, by the way, this is what it will cost.' The vision for ministry comes first, finances are secondary." He has discovered that when people have a vision worth giving to, they love to give.

A church struggling financially is like an airplane that is overloaded, off course, and underfueled. The load of debt is so heavy that the church uses most of its energy just staying aloft. A church whose mission statement gives priority to ministry and outreach but whose budget gives priority to institutional maintenance is like a plane whose flight path doesn't match its flight plan. A church whose giving is a fraction of what is needed to sustain vigorous growth is like a plane carrying only part of the fuel needed to reach its destination.

By itself, no amount of financial expertise can make ministry happen. But if a passion for ministering to people inspires your church to do whatever it takes to get out of debt, reorder budget priorities, and multiply giving, your church can enjoy a greater freedom for ministry than ever before. No longer overloaded, no longer off course, your church can be set free to fly.

Ray Bowman, a consultant living in Larkspur, Colo., works with churches to coordinate planning of facilities, finances, and ministries. Eddy Hall is a freelance writer and editor living in Goessel, Kan. This article is adapted from When Not to Borrow: Unconventional Financial Wisdom to Set Your Church Free *(Baker, 1996).*

Women's groups propose two national boards and discuss structure, name, and periodical

Markham, Ill.—"Each of us comes with probably more questions than answers," said Liz Klassen of Kitchener, Ont., president of Women in Mission.

Some of those questions were resolved, but many remained unanswered during meetings of the executive committees of Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC) of the Mennonite Church and Women in Mission (WM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church. The group met at Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill., on Oct. 17-19.

The two women's organizations plan to integrate in 1997, and this joint session continued the tangled process of merging two different structures, budgets, and memberships. Revisions to the integration proposal made during the weekend will be sent to regional presidents for feedback and will be discussed again at a March meeting of the two executive committees. Delegates will vote on a final proposal either by mail or at denominational assemblies in the summer of 1997.

The executive committees are proposing "Mennonite Women's Association" as the name for the merged body. After hefty discussion about wording, the committees also agreed to suggest a purpose statement that says the group "encourages women to nurture their life in Christ, study the Bible, utilize their gifts, hear each other, and engage in mission and service."

Organizational structure dominated much of the discussions. During the weekend, what began as an idea for a strong binational board was reduced to a binational council to meet every two years for inspiration and to cultivate relationships between the United States and Canada. Each national body would function independently with its own constitution and bylaws. A Canadian board structure is basically in place, so much of the conversation focused on the makeup and role of the U.S. board.

• • •

Ethnic representation on this U.S. board and executive committee was the center of several impassioned exchanges on Friday. The WMSC executive committee currently has representatives from the African-American Mennonite Association and Hispanic Mennonite Council. Several in the group asked whether that guaranteed minority representation would be absent in a new structure.

A proposal of one rotating ethnic representative on the U.S. board didn't sit well with many in the group. "It's difficult for one ethnic group to represent all ethnic groups," said Rose Covington, St. Anne, Ill.

Terri Plank Brenneman, South Pasadena, Calif., added that the associate groups in the Mennonite Church "have worked so hard to get a voice. I'd hate to see that effort destroyed."

After an unscheduled time of prayer and tabling of the issue until Saturday, the group decided to propose that representatives from associate or other special interest groups can have seats on the U.S. board. They could then request to be on the executive committee.

The group also deliberated on how fast to move in developing one periodical for the merged group. Some of the group said that the publications, *Voice* (WMSC) and *Window* (WM), should be discontinued during an interim time of market research and until a new constitution and executives are in place. Others said that the periodical is important for nourishing identity and strengthening support.

"We need to have it kicking the moment we merge," said Susan Gingerich, WMSC president.

In the end, it was decided that the staffpersons of the two organizations would coordinate a survey of constituents regarding ideas for a new publication and that the group would take further action on the issue in March.

• • •

WM and WMSC held several separate sessions during the weekend to work on their own agendas. "It doesn't really matter in a year," joked one woman about her length of term, encapsulating the difficulty of each group proceeding with "business as usual" with integration on the horizon.

In their separate session, WMSC discussed plans for Orlando 97, appointed WMSC delegates to the General Assembly, and agreed to assist an Anabaptist publisher in Colombia in producing a devotional guide.

Although most of the weekend's business had to do with the nitty-gritty details of creating a new organization, larger questions of identity and loyalty remain. "We know basically how to proceed, and we probably know how to integrate," said Susan Jantzen, WM coordinator. "But I don't know that any of us knows how to build a new soul [for the integrated group] in advance."

—*Valerie Weaver*

WMSC executive committee member Pat Swartzendruber (left) makes a point during integration discussions while Seferina DeLeon (center) and Joy Yoder Hess listen. The women's groups met Oct. 17-19 in Markham, Ill.

'They refuse to avenge themselves'

MCC Burundi workers learn from women coping with the trauma of war

Suzy Yoder, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Burundi country representative, wrote this personal reflection about her experiences with MCC-sponsored trauma healing workshops.—Editor

Nairobi, Kenya (MCC)—Thousands of Burundian women have been forced from their homes over the last three years. During recent trauma healing workshops in Bujumbura, Burundi's capital, I came to realize the tragic complexity of these women's experiences. A church team from Minnesota conducted the first week-long trauma healing workshop. At the women's request, MCC followed up with more sessions during the following weeks. Each of the 20 women had her own tragic tale.

MCC plans to sponsor at least four more sessions. I will provide materials on trauma, conflict resolution, Christian encouragement, and group facilitation. Burundian women pastors or leaders will choose participants and provide coordination. At one meeting, I asked the women to share what sustains them in this crisis and what diminishes their fear. This is what they said:

Praying. They pray often and with emotion—asking for peace for their land and protection for themselves, family, and friends. They believe only God can solve their problems, and they are waiting patiently for God's intervention or for the second coming.

Preparing for death. One woman said, "I can face the day if I feel ready to face God." One expressed that she is closer to God now than before the troubles. She wondered if it would be better to die now than when life gets sane again and people go about their lives, forgetting God once more. Many women seem resigned to imminent death.

Working together. Often it is too dangerous to walk to the fields. But when the military is no longer around and no rebels have appeared, the women try to hoe, plant, or harvest. They are often too scared to work alone and prefer to go with friends. They are willing to continue working despite the danger, because they want to survive and they hope that tomorrow peace will come.

Reading Scripture. The women feel comforted when they read about the last days in Matthew 24 and passages about Israel in the Old Testament. For them, reading these passages that describe what they are seeing means God knows all about their situation and even put it in the Bible so they could understand what is happening. The women feel especially reassured by Scripture on vengeance. Their hearts are filled with vengeance, but they refuse to avenge themselves and believe God will take care of it. Many take seriously the passages about loving enemies.

Singing and dancing. These activities help them forget momentarily and calm their stress, putting joy into their weary days and giving them hope.

Telling their stories. The women recount their stories repeatedly while others listen and empathize. They feel less alone and understand they aren't singled out in their suffering. They realize everyone—Hutus and Tutsis—has been traumatized by massacres, ambushes, and burnings. If not directly, they experience secondary trauma by caring for the people who have been victims, and they all live in fear of what might happen next.—*Suzy Yoder*

Burundian women work together to plant beans. They are often too frightened to work alone because of continued danger from ethnic conflict in their country. MCC is sponsoring trauma healing workshops for women in the capital city of Burundi.

EMU starts program in distance learning

Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)—Take a seminary course in your own home? Using your home computer?

Starting on Jan. 2, 1997, Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) will offer a pilot course in what could become a full-fledged distance learning program. Participants from across North America will be able to link up with their instructor and classmates through their computers.

The target audience for the program is pastors and other church workers who are not able to attend traditional graduate-level classes because of career, family, or geographic limitations. The course will be a seminary-level, introductory class called "New Testament: Text in Context."

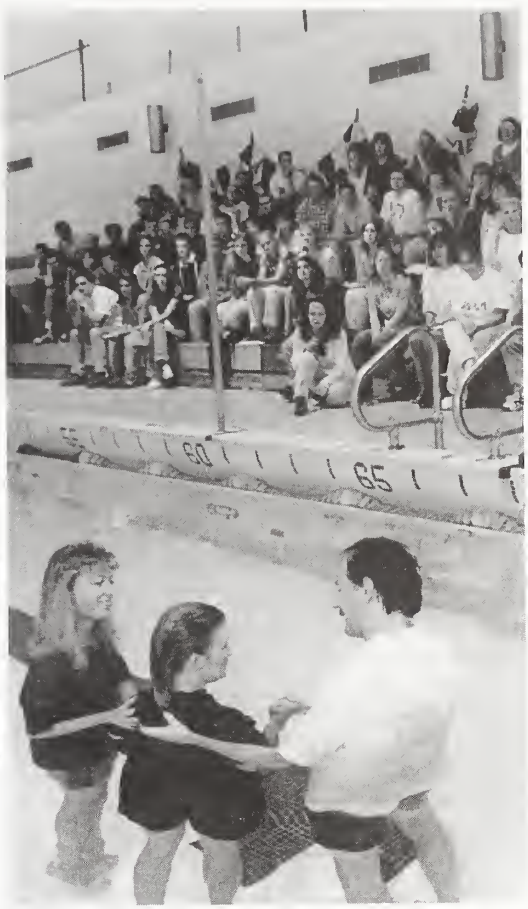
"This exciting new venture in distance learning allows us to reach out to the broader church community," says Marie S. Morris, who chairs EMU's distance learning committee. "Unlike video conferencing, the use of electronic mail fosters interactive learning between the professor and classmates but in the comfort of one's own home."

Computer hardware requirements include a Windows system, a modem, Internet access, and sound circuitry. Among the software requirements are electronic mail and web browser.

Students will be expected to spend at least eight hours on the course each week, including class time, computer work, and reading. They will have group time together as well as individual access to the instructor.

The instructor is Paul M. Zehr, associate director of external programs for Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

—*Jim Bishop*



Pool baptisms. *Millersville, Pa. (EMM)*—Stacy Garman (center) is baptized by Dave and Carol Witmer in the Millersville University's Pucillo Gymnasium pool. About 75 people watched as Garman and Matt Weidman, both Millersville University students, were baptized on Sept. 29. They are part of University Christian Fellowship (UCF), a student-led congregation on the university campus. UCF is a church planting effort of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference and Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Friends and family of the students sat on the poolside bleachers and listened to UCF's pastor, Duane Metzler, preach a baptismal message. UCF cell group coordinator Dave Witmer conducted the baptisms.

"The Holy Spirit seemed to fill the gym," says Becky Egberts, a student who attended the baptisms. "It was a joyful time of worship and celebration of life found in Jesus Christ."—*Carol Wert*

Southeast moves toward separation with church

Brooksville, Fla.—A reaffirmation of Southeast Mennonite Conference Statement on Homosexuality and the 1987 General Assembly Statement on Human Sexuality passed by an 88 percent vote during the Oct. 4-6 annual meeting of the Southeast Mennonite Conference.

The delegate body also approved by an 88 percent vote a motion referring to a conference bylaw that states that "conference council may seek mutual agreement with the [dissenting] congregation for its separation from the conference."

The congregation in question is Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship (AMF), which accepted into membership a gay couple living in a covenanted relationship.

Heidi Regier Kreider reported on discussions between a conference delegation and AMF about AMF's discernment process, the Mennonite Church's position on homosexuality, and the relationship between AMF and Southeast Conference.

"As far as I can see, there's not going to be a change in terms of AMF's action," say Raymond Martin, conference minister, adding that the conference position won't likely change either. "I think what we're doing now is looking for mutual agreement on the issue."

Elaine Swartzentruber, member of AMF, says she hopes options other than separation are considered. "I am hoping that the time between now and when a decision must be made might be a time of really facing what it means—for AMF and for the conference—to be about the business of excluding, cutting off, and separating, rather than the work of calling in, healing, and making whole."

In other conference business, the 1997 budget was approved and the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* was adopted.

Maya Angelou's library is the recipient of books from Faith & Life Press, the publisher for the General Conference Mennonite Church. When Susan Janzen, Faith & Life Press editorial director, saw a request for book donations from the well-known poet in *Publishers Weekly*, she was quick to send over 60 titles, including curriculum for children, youth, and adults. Angelou started a library in her home congregation in Winston-Salem, N.C., because many libraries in nearby neighborhoods have been closed or had their hours of operation reduced.

"I saw the project as a literacy issue," says Janzen. "But it is a justice issue, too, because the libraries have been closed in poor neighborhoods and in African-American neighborhoods," she says.

—*GCMC news service*

City living is a little brighter for Mauricio De Paz, an immigrant from El Salvador now living in Blumenort, Man. De Paz, who is currently looking for work and is on social assistance, has a garden on land owned by Mennonite farmers Bonnie and Mark Loewen. The garden provides De Paz and his family and friends with an opportunity to work and to grow some of their own food. "It feels like I am working in El Salvador," says De Paz, who was a dairy farmer in his country. "I like to work hard."

The Loewens, who were put in touch with several Salvadoran families through the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, say they decided to share their land because they feel for rural immigrants who are stuck in high-rise buildings in the inner city. They also say that the Salvadorans are for them models of practicality and resourcefulness. "Their presence keeps us accountable with food and garbage [use and disposal]," says Bonnie.

As extended families work together in the garden, "they teach us, who live so independently, to nurture relationships," she adds.—*Mennonite Reporter*

Transporting 834 mares across the Atlantic to help Poland's crumbling economy was the mission of 32 Mennonite and Brethren teenagers in the summer of 1946, part of a relief project of the United Nations in cooperation with Mennonite Central Committee and Church of the Brethren Service Committee. Sixteen of the group met at Camp Friedenswald on July 19-21 for a 50-year reunion to reminisce about the experience.

Conditions on the boat were less than ideal—for both the men and the horses. Water contaminated by a cat's carcass, floating mines left over from World War II, a pistol-carrying captain, and dying horses were only a few of the elements of the sea adventure.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

MCC examines identity as income shrinks

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is becoming a new creation. But what it is becoming is still unknown.

"What is the new assembly of ideas that drives us?" asked treasurer Paul Quiring, Fresno, Calif., at MCC international's executive committee meetings held here, Sept. 27-28.

He observed that MCC has evolved from a narrowly focused agency in the 1970s to an agency with many foci in the 1980s. Now, he said, MCC needs to define again its core vision.

Karen Klassen Harder, executive committee member from North Newton, Kan., echoed the call for an organized effort to set direction. "There is a point where if we want to move to a different kind of organization, we have to put in place something other than minor adjustments," she said.

Falling revenue. Part of the push to consider MCC structure comes from shrinking income. Although constituent giving in recent years has kept pace with inflation, U.S. giving is still projected to fall short of the 6 percent increase MCC had budgeted this year. Financial services staff predict ending 1996 with income 2-3 percent under budget.

Because grant income and other revenue have fallen, and because of the declining value of the Canadian dollar, MCC expects income in 1997 for international programs to be at its lowest level since 1982 in inflation-adjusted dollars.

Another part of the push comes from a decision the executive committee made in June to cap MCC's spending in North America at 25 percent of MCC's total cash budget. The limit came in response to falling income combined with steady increases in overseas program spending in North America in recent years.

'The children have grown up.' The desire to limit North American spending also prodded the executive committee to reevaluate its relationships to other parts of MCC. In addition to the binational MCC, MCC Canada and MCC U.S. each have their own boards and executive committees, as do the four regional and five provincial MCC offices.

The executive committee encouraged staff to work more closely with the 11 other MCC boards and executive committees in strategic planning.

Vidya Narimalla, Toronto, Ont., a newly appointed member-at-large on the Mennonite Central Committee board, raises an issue at MCC executive committee meetings Sept. 27-28.

"MCC has spawned children, and now [they] have grown up," Quiring said of the regional and provincial offices. "They do not look only to Akron for a vision."

A further question of MCC's identity came when committee member Vidya Narimalla from Toronto, Ont., asked why MCC nearly always employs North Americans as overseas country directors rather than employing local people.

"It is not a question of local people being capable," responded MCC overseas director Ray Brubacher. "I think it's a question of identity and whom we're representing."

He asked Jim Shenk, co-director of Africa programs, to share his experience of Africans asking that North American agencies not use Africans as their representatives. Shenk said the Africans asked for clarity about identities: "Don't camouflage [your being a North American agency] by having an African be your director."

In other business, the executive committee approved an above-budget request to support an orphanage expansion in Paraguay and approved moving money from a Ten Thousand Villages capital reserve fund to cover operating deficits.

—Larry Penner

Seattle church raises concern about investment

Seattle, Wash.—The Seattle Mennonite Church has sent a letter to James R. Moffett, chair of Freeport-McMoRan, Inc., raising concerns about Freeport's mining activities in Irian Jaya in Indonesia.

The congregation received a block of Freeport-McMoRan stock as a donation. Upon receiving Freeport's annual report, members learned that Freeport's mining activities were extremely controversial.

Irian Jaya came under Indonesian control in 1963 when the Dutch handed the area over to Indonesia in a United Nations-endorsed process, which many Irianese consider an injustice. Four years later, Freeport-McMoRan became the first company to negotiate a Contract of Work with the Indonesian government, which overrides laws and gives the company exclusive mining rights to the then-recently discovered Erstberg copper deposit. In 1988, Freeport discovered a massive copper and gold deposit at Grasberg. The Amungme and Komoro people, who live in and around Freeport's Contract of Work area, have been alienated from their tribal lands and want to be consulted about the use of their lands.

"We felt called on to request further information from Freeport concerning their environmental record, treatment of native Indonesians, and a lawsuit filed against Freeport by the Amungme people of that area," says Weldon Nisly, pastor of the Seattle Mennonite Church. "Holding corporations accountable is a valid form of witness."

- **Training center on hold.** A discipleship training center for young adults proposed to begin among French Mennonites in September has been postponed because of a lack of French young people signing up for the program. The Mennonite churches in France had asked Eastern Mennonite Missions and the Global Disciples Training Network to help them begin a training center and short-term missions program. Five North Americans who had planned to participate in the September training are instead serving as a Youth Evangelism Team among Mennonite churches in France.

- **Special care unit to open.** Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa., recently announced plans to build a special care center called "The Heritage" for people with dementia and other diseases that affect reasoning and memory. They hope to break ground in 1997.

- **Free hymnals available.** Washington (D.C.) Community Fellowship has 187 Mennonite hymnals (1969 printing) available to any church or organization for free. Contact Cheryl Montgomery at 202 543-1926.

- **New appointments:**

Gilberto Pérez, Jr., director of development, Academia Menonita Betania, Aibonito, P.R.

José L. Vázquez, administrator of Academia Menonita Betania, Aibonito, P.R.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Michael Dean was licensed and installed as full-time pastor at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill., on July 14.

Delmer and Elsie Epp were installed as copastors of East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock, Ont., on Sept. 22.

David Greiser was installed as copastor of Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church on Oct. 13.

Cal Kaufman was installed as part-time pastor at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill., on July 14.

Keith W. Meyers will be licensed and installed as pastor of Zion Mennonite Fellowship, Elmira, Ont., on Dec. 15.

Doug and Wanda Roth Amstutz were installed as copastors of Mennonite Church of Scottdale (Pa.) on Sept. 29.

- **Coming events:**

School for Christian Living, Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va., Oct. 23, 30, Nov. 6, 13, 20. Three classes offered are "Positive Parenting" by Harvey Yoder, "Gathering for Prayer" by Mark Wenger, and "Discovering Everyday Spirituality" by Brenda Holliday. More information from 540 949-8945.

Ethnic fair, Goshen (Ind.) College, Nov. 2. This year's feature is fabric from 23 countries. Includes music and dance performances, food from 20 different ethnic groups, and international crafts. More information from Janette Yoder at 219 535-7545.

35th annual international gift festival, Fairfield (Pa.) Mennonite Church, Nov. 7-8. Proceeds of the sale go to Ten Thousand Villages, formerly Selfhelp Crafts. More information from 717 642-5440.

- **New books:**

Living Unplugged: Young Adults, Faith, and the Uncommon Life, by Pam Peters-Pries, seeks to make sense of the harried lives, diverse experiences, and challenges facing young adults in the 1990s. Available from Faith & Life Press, 800 743-2484.

To See Each Other's Good, edited by Dorothy Yoder Nyce, is a collection of stories about women around the globe. Seventeen countries are represented, and 21 women have contributed stories. Purchasers of the book are encouraged to buy a gift copy to be sent to a non-North American woman attending Mennonite World Conference. Ordering information is available from Dorothy Yoder Nyce, 1603 S. 15th St., Goshen, IN 46526.

- **New resources:**

Decide for Peace is a guide for personal Bible study and reflection on conscientious objection for youth and adults. Written by Eddy Hall, it is designed for individual use, mentoring, or group study. Includes a four-session leader's guide. Available from Faith & Life Press, 800 743-2484.

Generation Why Bible Studies for Fall 1996 are *How Do You Know? Wisdom in the Bible* by Chris Bowman and *Does God Fight? Violence in the Bible* by Dave Radcliffe. Available from Faith & Life Press, 800 743-2484.

- **Job openings:**

Administrative assistant, Home Ministries department, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa. Responsibilities include providing support services for human resources, church planter assessment processes, event planning details, and secretarial tasks. Position available immediately. Contact Dave Witmer at 717 898-2251.

Group insurance sales specialist, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, Ind. Qualifications include licensure in life and health insurance and willingness to travel up to half-time. Sales or marketing experience desirable. Responsibilities include selling and servicing self-insured health products, brokered life, LTD, and STD products to employers and congregations. Send résumé to MMA, Human Resources Department, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.

Inorganic chemist, Bluffton (Ohio) College. Tenure-track faculty position begins fall of 1997. Doctorate in inorganic chemistry required. Contact Amy Tabler at Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196. Consideration of applications begins Jan. 15, 1997.

Sales support manager, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, Ind. Responsibilities include supervising sales representatives and agent support staff, leading activities of the department in providing sales support to agents and regional managers. Qualifications include licensure in health, life, and investments, CLU or ChFC designation, and management and insurance sales experience. Send résumé to MMA, Human Resources Department, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527.

NEW MEMBERS

Communion Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.: Brad and Kayola Suderman, Bob Bodem, Ginger Wonderly, and Jim and Laura Horning.

Dayspring Christian Fellowship, North Canton, Ohio: Collin Mihalik, Diana Miha-

Workers begin assignments. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Fifty-seven workers participated in orientation at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) headquarters, Sept. 10-20. Each year about 475 people enter MCC assignments in any of the more than 50 countries in which MCC serves. The following workers oriented Sept. 10-20 are affiliated with the Mennonite Church:

First row (seated): Art and Janice Klassen, office coordinators, Penh, Cambodia; Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, director of MCC U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries, Akron, Pa.; Elaine Shenk, administrative assistant, Albuquerque, N.M.; David and Hannah Conwell, with parents, Harlingen, Texas; Duane, with Hannah, and Marilyn Yoder, maintenance worker and computer coordinator, Akron.

Second row (standing): Sherri Enns, administrative secretary, Akron; Anthony Beery, canner operator, Akron; Mary and George Fast, Tea Room server and maintenance worker, Ephrata and Akron; Kristen and Bill Conwell, attorney (Bill), Harlingen, Texas; Matius Larson Krisetya, rural project officer, Jamaica; Fred Peters, returns supervisor, Akron; Karin Larson Krisetya, teacher, Jamaica; Elizabeth Peters, consignment assistant, Akron; Sonia Araujo, administrative assistant and newsletter editor, Chicago, Ill.

lik, Sharla Ramer, and Stephen Wolf.
South Hutchinson, Kan.: Kelly Schrock and Stacy Schrock.
Weavers, Harrisonburg, Va.: Nancy Deputy, Daniel Layman, and Jack Holden.

BIRTHS

Brunk, Beth Hess and Steve, Harrisonburg, Va., Monica Joy (first child), Aug. 2.
Cummings, Karen Flight and Isaac, Sr., Akron, N.Y., Ashley Elizabeth (third child), Sept. 27.
Handrich, Pam Geister and Rick, Fairview, Mich., Austin Ron (first child), Sept. 28.
Hange, Maren Tyedmers and Roy, Damascus, Syria, Miriam (first child), Aug. 23.
Hathaway, Jeanette Kauffman and David, Goshen, Ind., Victoria Kay (third child), Oct. 7.
Horner, Joanne Bourquin and Terry, Canton, Ohio, (twins) Olivia Mae and Leah Rose (second and third children), Sept. 30.
Johnson-Evers, Connie and Steve, Goshen, Ind., Kyle Steven (second child), June 3.
Kelley, Karen Kinsey and Dennis, Archbold, Ohio, Jackson Thomas (third child), Sept. 27.
Lechlitner, Kris Glenn and Doug, Elkhart, Ind., Sierra Alexis (second child), Oct. 1.
Mullet, Jill Basinger and Steve, Elkhart, Ind., Luke Basinger (second child), Aug. 31.
Mumaw, Michele and Jim, Harrisonburg, Va., Katherine Elizabeth (first child), June 9.
Musick, Mary and Boyd, Williamsburg, Va., Hannah Rose (third child), Oct. 6.
Rhodes, Megan Schaefer and Myron, Harrisonburg, Va., Leanna Marie (first child), July 6.
Shumaker, Tami Short and Russell, Cincinnati, Ohio, Sarah Marie, Sept. 29.
Stotts, Kellie Pletcher and David, Goshen, Ind., Jordan Leigh (first child), Oct. 3.
Stucky, Kirsten Klassen and Mark, Elkhart, Ind., Anya Klassen (first child), Oct. 7.
Swartley, Lynn Testone and James, Souderton, Pa., Dennis James (second child), Oct. 5.
Wyse, Lisa Hiebert and Donavon, Fairview, Mich., Taryn Kaylee (fourth child), Oct. 2.

MARRIAGES

Bauman-Hertzler: Harold E. Bauman, Goshen, Ind. (Assembly), and Carolyn W. Hertzler, Goshen, Ind. (College), Sept. 1, by Mary Lehman Yoder.
Blosser-Eby: Melanie Blosser, Harrisonburg, Va. (Weavers), and Lawrence Eby, Harrisonburg, Va. (Weavers), May 11, by Joseph C. Shenk.
Brunner-Holt: Travis Brunner, Telford, Pa. (Rockhill), and Jamie Holt, Telford, Pa. (Rockhill), Oct. 5, by Michael L. Derstine and Paul Brunner (uncle of the groom).
Chadwell-Wyse: Ian Chadwell, Bristol, United Kingdom, and Cynthia Wyse, Eureka, Ill. (Roanoke), Sept. 14, by Elmer Wyse (father of the bride).
Clymer-Few: Angela Sue Clymer, Charlottesville, Va., and Stephen Few, Charlottesville, Va., Sept. 28, by Myron S. Augsburger.
Eller-Stancato: Kimberly Eller, Coopersburg, Pa. (Blooming Glen), and Philip R. Stancato, Quakertown, Pa. (Episcopal), Oct. 5, by Truman H. Brunk Jr.
Evers-King: Paula Evers, Harrisonburg, Va. (Weavers), and Doug King, Harrisonburg, Va. (Weavers), Aug. 17, by Larry Nesselrodt and Joseph C. Shenk.
Frye-Gingerich: Joas Frye, Bristol, Ind., and Barbara Gingerich, Middlebury, Ind. (First), Sept. 14, by Linford Martin.
Godshall-Hough: Sheila Godshall, Canadensis, Pa. (Spruce Lake Fellowship), and Benjamin Hough, Canadensis, Pa., Sept. 8, by Henry Musselman and Stanley Godshall (grandfather of the bride).
High-Stauffer: Thomas High, East Greenville, Pa. (West Swamp), and Lieda Stauffer (Rockhill), Sept. 28, by Michael L. Derstine.
Martin-Wiser: Amy Martin, Indianapolis, Ind. (East Goshen), and Tom Wiser, Indianapolis, Ind. (Baptist), Aug. 10, by Rev. Jordan.

DEATHS

Bender, Dorcas Anna, 57. Born: June 4, 1939, Meyersdale, Pa., to Floyd C. and Anna Maust Bender. Died: Sept. 2, 1996, of heart failure. Survivors—mother; brothers and sisters: Philip, Paul, Naomi, Sarah, Lois. Funeral and burial: Sept. 4, Oak Dale Mennonite Church, by Joe Byler and John Yoder.
Chapple, Anna Sommerfeld, 93, Hesston, Kan. Born: Sept. 4, 1903, McPherson County, Kan., to Henry and Elva Smith Sommerfeld. Died: Oct. 4, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—children: Verna Harder, Hazel Wiebe, James; brother: Ed Sommerfeld; 11 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: George Chapple (husband). Funeral: Oct. 7, Whitestone Mennonite Church, by Louise Wideman. Burial: Halstead Cemetery.
Grove, Annie Byer, 97, Stouffville, Ont. Born: July 22, 1899, Markham, Ont., to Jesse and Emma Haacke Byer. Died: July 23, 1996, Stouffville, Ont. Survivors—children: Marion Wideman, Thelma Hoover, Pearl Wideman; brother and sister: Lorne Byer, Grace Avis; 17 grandchildren, 39 great-grandchildren, 4 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Russel R. Grove (husband), Elmer and Merlin (sons). Funeral and burial: July 28, Wideman Mennonite Church, by Laurence Burkholder.
Hochstetler, Mary Maust, 97, Nappanee, Ind. Born: March 27, 1899, Nappanee, Ind., to Nelson B. and Susan Burkholder Maust. Died: Sept. 1, 1996, Nappanee, Ind. Survivors—children: Dean, Alan, Mary Ellen Kaufman, Miriam Hochstetler; 4 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren, 4 stepgrandchildren, 4 stepgreat-grandchildren. Predeceased by: William Hochstetler (husband) and Eugene (son). Funeral: Sept. 4, North Main Street Mennonite Church, by Ken Bontreger. Burial: South Union Cemetery.
Kiser, Oren S., 85, Fishersville, Va. Born: June 24, 1911, LaJunta, Colo., to Jacob and Sally Shank Kiser. Died: Oct. 5, 1996, Fishersville, Va., of heart failure. Survivors—children: Melba Kiser Heatwole, Norman, O. Sanford, Ellen Kiser Wyant, Charlotte Kiser Rhodes, Alta Sue Kiser

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- more than 200 in the colleges
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the difference
value Mennonite education

Gomez, Richard; brother and sisters: Alvin, Ruby Swope, Della Benner, Grace Eshleman; 24 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Thelma Campbell Kiser (wife). Funeral and burial: Oct. 8, Springdale Mennonite Church, by Mark Wenger, Willard Heatwole, and Richard Showalter.

Landis, Bessie R. Yothers, 84, Franconia, Pa. Born: Jan. 13, 1912, Dublin, Pa., to Abram and Annie Rice Yothers. Died: Sept. 29, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—husband: Arthur H. Landis; children: Harold Y., Ruth M. Willouer; brothers and sisters: Henry and Warren Yothers, Anna M. Yoder, Elsie R. Moyer, Ruth R. Moyer, Florence Hunsberger, Marion Zischang, Naomi Morton; 6 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 3, Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel, by John M. Ehst, Steven E. Landis, and Floyd M. Hackman. Burial: Franconia Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Martin, Ellen Petre, 66, Washington, D.C. Born: June 30, 1930, Maugansville, Md., to John Mark and Ada Horst Risser Petre. Died: Sept. 17, 1996, Washington, D.C. Survivors—husband: Donald E. Martin; children: Judith Ann, Rowena Quinones Martin, Douglas Eugene; sisters: Ethel P. Martin, Mary P. Wilfong; 2 grandchildren. Congregational membership: Hebron Mennonite Church. Funeral: Sept. 20, Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, by Emmanuel Martin, William Wilson, and Allen Goetcheus. Burial: Reiffs Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Rogie, Alvin D., 85, Albany, Ore. Born: June 22, 1911, Needy, Ore., to John and Sarah Yoder Rogie. Died: Sept. 24, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—wife: Pauline Gingerich Rogie; children: Muriel Radabaugh, Melvin, Glenn; sisters: Martha Schultz, Alice; foster sister: Dorothy Good; 3 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27, Brownsville Mennonite Church, by Amos Kropf and Arlen Krabill. Burial: Hopewell Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Roth, Truman N., 85, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Dec. 9, 1910, Archbold, Ohio, to Enos and Fannie Sauder Roth. Died: Oct. 12, 1996, Archbold, Ohio, of a heart attack. Survivors—children: Roger, Mabel Ann Klinger, Marlene Graf, James; brother and sisters: Clarence, Lucile Beck, Florence Roth; 14 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Luetta Gautsche Roth (wife). Funeral: Oct. 14, Zion Mennonite Church, by Ron Guengerich and Dee Swartz. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Stutzman, Gordon Calvin, 82, Albany, Ore. Born: March 17, 1914, Woodriver, Neb., to Ora and Lydia Boshart Stutzman. Died: Oct. 3, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—wife: Gladys Roth Stutzman; daughter: Yvonne Kropf; brothers and sisters: Harry, Percy, and Amos Gerig, Dorothy Detweiler, Clara Krabill, Mary Krabill, Wilma Sanderson; one grandchild, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 7, Lebanon Mennonite Church, by Brent Kauffman, Gordon Miller, and Louis Lehman. Burial: Fairview Mennonite Cemetery.

Troyer, Elsie M. Eicher, 93, Milford, Neb. Born: April 16, 1903, Milford, Neb., to Martin and Kathyrn Roth Eicher. Died: Oct. 9, 1996, Milford, Neb. Survivors—children: Grace Roth, Lela Benson, Royden, Stanley, Lauren, Cloy, Kenneth; 43 grandchildren, 119 great-grandchildren, 12 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: John R. Troyer (husband) and Milton (son). Congregational membership: Beth-El Mennonite Church. Funeral: Oct. 12, Bellwood Mennonite Church, by John C. King. Burial: West Fairview Cemetery.

Weaver, Harry H., Jr., 91. Born: Aug. 29, 1905, Lancaster County, Pa., to Harry M. Sr., and Susan Hershey Weaver. Died: Sept. 14, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of pneumonia and congestive heart failure. Survivors—children: Glenn H., Lois Friesen, Robert L.; 6 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lottie Zimmerman Weaver (wife) and Clair R. (son). Funeral: Sept. 19, Hinkletown Mennonite Church, by Glenn Sauder, Warren Good, Donald Good, and Bill Detweiler. Burial: Weaverland Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Zehr, Mary E., 73, Ludlow, Ill. Born: Aug. 10, 1923, Chenoa, Ill., to George and Ella Stalter Roszhart. Died: Sept. 7, 1996, Champaign, Ill. Survivors—husband: Melvin Zehr; children: Paul, Tom, Philip, Rebecca Moyer; sister: Evelyn May; stepmother: Ethel Roszhart; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11, East Bend Mennonite Church, by Calvin Kaufman and Michael Dean. Burial: East Bend Memorial Garden.

Make straight the wall. *Accra, Ghana (MBM)*—Randy Fath (center), a member of Living Water church in Dalton, Ohio, uses string to check the straightness of a wall being built for a new classroom building at Good News Theological College and Seminary in Accra, Ghana. Fath was part of a five-member building team which traveled to Ghana from Aug. 15-Sept. 18 as part of a short-term service assignment with Mennonite Board of Missions. Good News was founded 25 years ago to serve African Independent Churches.

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A new limited edition print, *A Community Spirit,* by world-renowned artist P. Buckley Moss is available from MCC. The total purchase price benefits the people of Africa through MCC's relief and development work.

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What I wonder about on Stewardship Sunday

This coming Sunday, November 3, has been designated by the Mennonite Church to be Stewardship Sunday. That means many of us will hear sermons about God's gifts and how, in gratitude, we should return some of what we've received to God. We'll sit in discussion groups and agree that stewardship involves *much more* than money. Yet, somewhere along the way, we'll be reminded that stewardship *is also* money—and we should consider giving more.

But there are some things we likely won't talk about, questions that come just too close home. They're what I wonder about as I sit through another Stewardship Sunday:

1. How did our ancestors ever worship? Bare walls, tile floors, wooden benches—it must have been hard to concentrate on worship in their meeting spaces! Heat? Shovel another bucket of coal in the stove. Air conditioning? Open the windows.

We've come a long way, sisters and brothers. Today the carpet on our floors matches the padding on our pews or chairs. We sing with pianos and, in more and more churches, organs—many electronic, some pipe. Our sound systems are state-of-the-art. So are our restrooms, fellowship halls, nurseries, kitchens, even our custodial closets.

Nor do we house all this in ordinary buildings. Twice in the past year, I've heard Mennonite leaders lament that they're spending more and more of their time scheduling rentals in new buildings with their almost-perfect acoustics.

2. Whatever happened to the simple lifestyle? Not only in our congregations, but also in our homes and in our personal lives.

Remember the *More-with-Less Cookbook* and *Living More with Less*? How proud we were when Mennonite Central Committee and Herald Press collaborated in late 1970s to produce these volumes on simple living. Not only did we cook up a storm using recipes from around the world, but we Mennonites soon got a reputation for doing something concrete about recycling the earth's resources.

Who talks about that today? The only time I hear more with less anymore is when someone brings a "different" dish to a church potluck—where, by the way, I've never heard any complaints about not enough to eat, but plenty about too much.

3. When is enough enough? Back when I joined the work force 30 years ago, I got an income figure in my head that I hoped I'd reach someday. Then, I decided, I'd no longer have to worry about money and could give more of my time and resources to the church.

I've almost reached that income goal. Strangely, my economic concerns are still much the same: making expenses and income meet, surviving an emergency, responding with more money and more joy to appeals from the church.

Sure, there's been inflation. And 30 years ago I didn't anticipate everything I'd be responsible for today. But I must admit that what were once luxuries have graduated to creature comforts and today are becoming basic necessities.

4. Why do we need Stewardship Sunday? It's surely not for more sermons about generosity, more discussions about defining stewardship, more prods to give more. We all know we should and can do better. Maybe Stewardship Sunday can help us think about the really tough economic questions of our lives. These have more to do with how and what we spend on ourselves than they do with what and how we give back to God.—*jlp*

Mennobytes

This issue *Gospel Herald* begins a new feature—"Mennobytes," a more-or-less monthly page featuring short essays about our life as Christians and as Mennonites.

This page will push out the edges on a variety of topics: ideas for how we might be more faithful to God, critiques about how we are doing so now. The subject in this issue is our pride and our stance as Mennonites as we work with others. We have future installments scheduled on becoming people of grace and on the language we use.

Contributions are welcome. Essays should be about Mennonite church life and work, no more than 700 words long. Send them to: "Mennobytes," 616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: *GHerald%mph@mcimail.com.—jlp*

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November 5, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Menno Simons: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid: Jesus Christ."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Doug Hochstetler:
Replacing 'Did you win?' with 'How did you play?' 4

Moses Slabaugh:
The groans of an Omega 7

Integration Committee proposes model with regional centers 9

MCC visitors learn from Christians in Gaza and West Bank 10

Not the founder but the rescuer:

Following Menno—as he followed Christ

So how do we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons? Do we honor the man? Critique him? Or reflect and learn for the future?

by Walter Sawatsky

When I turned 50 last July, my parents gave me something that my grandfather had left for me when he died 12 years ago—the *Complete Writings of Menno Simons*. I had never paid much attention to Menno, even though my church bears his name and even though I am a Mennonite historian. Likely that's because Anabaptist-Mennonite history does not center on one personality. For example, we don't cite Menno Simons in quite the same way Lutherans cite Martin Luther. Yet Menno is a significant figure in Anabaptist history.

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons. The Dutch Mennonites have celebrated this anniversary in numerous ways—they issued a special postage stamp and a poster with a modernized portrait of Menno. Dutch Mennonites also held a symposium in July in commemoration of Menno's birth. I had some reservations about attending such a gathering, given the fact that most of Menno Simons' writings are dedicated with the

O send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and I will praise you.—Psalm 43:3-4a, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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Following Menno—as h

(continued from page 1)

motto of 1 Cor. 3:11: "No other foundation can be laid than Jesus Christ." I went nonetheless.

What were we going to do at the conference in the Netherlands? Would we celebrate and honor this man, would we critique him, or would we reflect and try to learn for the future? What would we say of this famous character, born in 1496 in Holland, and after whom a significant part of the Radical Reformation was named?

During the Netherlands conference, we looked at the writings of Menno Simons and the discipleship theme that permeates them. Menno's phrasing is "drenched in Scripture" and frequently refers to Christ and his life and teachings. Lydia Harder read a paper on the Christology of Menno in which she listed about 20 different descriptions of Christ.

In his later writings, Menno became almost obsessed with the purity of the church. As we looked at his writings, we began to wonder if Menno's emphasis on purity and correctness is the root of the banning tradition with which so many Anabaptist groups have struggled.

We also tried to imagine the setting in which Menno wrote. Menno was not the founder of the Mennonites but rather the rescuer of them. The Anabaptist movement had started in a number of places, including the Netherlands, but it turned to extremes of violence and apocalyptic thought in Münster, Germany. Menno managed through his writings and his personal visits to build up a fellowship of congregations across the Netherlands, in Belgium, and down the Rhine. He lived underground for 20 years with "wanted posters" up and authorities hunting him. But he survived. He was not martyred, though some sympathizers were killed for sheltering him. Soon others began referring to them as the Mennists.

Besides learning about the context in which Menno Simons lived, we also listened to stories of how Menno's legacy is lived out today. Participants from the third world shared with us their experiences with Anabaptist groups in their countries.

An Ethiopian Mennonite leader told us that at 6 a.m., people line up in Addis Ababa for an 8 a.m. service which lasts two hours, and the next group is lined up a long time in advance to get seats for the second service. The same thing happens before the third service. The Ethiopian leader, Shemsuddin Abdo, also told us of his days in prison under the Marxists. Released after four-and-a-half years, Abdo told of

followed Christ

Menno Simons

his work these days—visiting his former jailers who are now themselves imprisoned. He regularly supplies them with food and medicine. A participant from Indonesia told us of Mennonites in that country eagerly gathering for worship.

On the other hand, our Dutch hosts spoke of their declining numbers. They told us that they aren't sure a Mennonite church will survive long enough in their country to celebrate the next major anniversary of Menno Simons' birth.

As we listened to stories from the third world, we noted the theme of suffering but also that the churches in those countries have not always experienced such growth. They have known very dry periods in their churches when nothing happened. During those times, they learned to wait, to be patient, and to pray without obvious answers. When growth did come, they told us, it happened in such a way that no one could take credit for it but instead that credit had to go to God's Spirit.

We ended by listening to stories of grace and forgiveness that contrasted starkly with the era of church bans at the end of Menno's life. These themes of forgiveness after difficulties, of being a flawed church, of not being perfect kept reminding us not so much of Menno but of Menno's Christ.

The winner of a Menno Simons essay contest ended his sermon on this theme. Gerhard Ratzlaff of Asuncion, Paraguay, painted a deeply appreciative picture of the way the Dutch Mennonite legacy is still present in Paraguay. Menno Colony had once been preoccupied with avoiding the world; now its members have become active in mission and service in society. For some in Paraguay, the word "Mennonite" still refers primarily to the ubiquitous Mennonite cheese they are acquainted with. But now others also notice the faith of the Mennonites.

"That is the point of our greatest debt to Menno," said Ratzlaff. "He still points us to the one who is so much greater than Menno."

All of these—the Dutch, Ethiopian, Indonesian, Paraguayan, and also we here in North America—are legacies of the faithfulness of Menno Simons, whose birth we remember today, 500 years later. But Menno would also have us look beyond the man to the one who not only inspired him but also served as his model for life. "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ."

Walter Sawatsky is associate professor of church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and director of the Mission Training Center at AMBS. This article is adapted from a presentation he gave this past summer at Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Anabaptist athletes:

Replacing 'Did you win?' with

Can there be a blend of religion and sports beyond outward appearances? Is it possible to reconcile athletic dominance with the humility of faith?

by Doug Hochstetler

A Mennonite high school soccer contest on a Thursday afternoon is usually full of competitiveness, striving, sweat, effort, glory to seek, and pride to protect. Images of combat emerge, and talk of "beating them" and "killing them" freely flows. Aggressiveness and domination are not only accepted, but they are encouraged and viewed as essential and noble qualities.

In stark contrast to this scene is a worship service or a person praying. The words that come to mind when one imagines a religious event include peace, humility, and calm.

The chasm between athletics and one's religion appears to be wide. Is it possible to blend athletic zeal with Christian devotion? Can these two seemingly incongruous entities—athletic performance and religious piety—be united?

Such a blending happens often—judging from outward appearances, that is. Christian athletes frequently give thanks to God for on-field performances in postgame interviews. Football players kneel in the end zone following a spectacular touchdown. Likewise, Mennonite high school and college teams frequently use prayer as they prepare for contests. Both examples show ways that religion and sport coexist in our society, in both secular and church circles.

Can this blend of religion and sport go any deeper than outward appearances? Is it possible, in substance and in spirit, to participate in athletics in Christian ways? Furthermore, is it possible to reconcile the apparent incompatibility of athletic pursuit, with its emphasis on pride, domination, and extravagance, with an Anabaptist faith expressed in peace and simplicity?

My interest in these questions prompted me to do a recent study of faculty at 10 Mennonite high schools. I asked them to share their opinions of athletics at their respective schools. The purpose was to find out whether Mennonites express their convictions through sports or whether there is philosophical conflict and practical ambiguity. My questions covered four areas of athletic programs: the importance of winning, balance and modesty, sense of community, and witness and a positive perspective on sports.

The study revealed several things:

Mennonite schools generally follow the pattern of athletics set up by society, sponsoring many teams that compete against both private and public schools. Many schools have established renowned programs, even producing state tournament championship teams.

Coaches seem concerned about their athletes as students, wanting them to succeed academically. Most faculty (81 percent) perceived coaches and teachers at their schools as working together toward academic development.

Athletics are being used to further the educational process of the schools. Almost 90 percent felt athletics help educate athletes in important ways.

The athletic departments do not appear to have a "win at all cost" mentality but seek to emphasize effort and improvement. Only three people I surveyed thought their athletic departments sought to win at all costs, while 145 (88 percent) said that was not the case. They agreed that the athletic programs emphasize other intangible elements more than winning.

Winning is important to the fans. Some

'How did you play?'

93 percent of the faculty agreed that fans expect athletes to perform well consistently. Not all felt this should be the case, however. One faculty member wrote, "I think fans should be pleased if the team is improving—more concerned about that than whether or not they win."

Team followers generally allow coaches room for personal growth, although there is a certain amount of pressure to produce winning teams. Almost half of those surveyed agreed that coaches are expected to generate teams that win. One faculty member suggested that fans do not allow coaches much if any margin for error.

The athletes find ways to "be good sports," although they sometimes complain to the officials. A high percentage of faculty (93 percent) think athletes at their schools find ways to exhibit healthy attitudes. Several faculty mentioned the importance of the athletes' reactions to calls that go against them. One commented, "It is a natural response [to disagree with officials], but we are to work at redirecting that 'natural response' to more positive reactions."

Sport is a powerful institution with the potential to affect our denomination in equally powerful ways. International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch recently stated, "We [the Olympics] are more important than the Catholic religion."

Mennonite high schools and the Mennonite church in general should be affirmed in several ways. Athletic departments keep in check the attitude of "winning at all cost," which is no small feat. The public judges coaches and athletes in terms of wins and rarely by any other yardstick. The idea of balance valued by our Mennonite community may help athletic departments keep sports in perspective. One faculty member said, "Improvement, character building, sportsmanship, attitude, and hard work should never be sacrificed to the god of victory. But winning is why we keep score—winning is a valid goal. It is not, however, the primary criterion of success in evaluating a program or a coach."

Both faculty and coaches in Mennonite high schools appear concerned for the total well-being of student athletes. Likewise, athletics seems to be used as a tool in the educational process for the schools.

Some challenges also emerge from the study. While the Mennonite high schools and perhaps

Mennonites in general view winning as only one part in the goal of athletics, the heightened place winning has in our society needs to be challenged constantly. It is difficult to take part in athletics without being drawn into this mentality. Too often following competition, we don't ask our student athletes, "How did you play?" or, "Did you learn something?" We usually ask, "Did you win?" This emphasis on winning may bring with it unrealistic expectations for athletes and coaches alike.

Sport is here to stay among Mennonites. Only time will tell how the church will respond.

Doug Hochstetler is women's basketball coach and physical education instructor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. He is working on his doctorate in the philosophy of sport at Penn State University.

New from Herald Press

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Six Amish barns burn to the ground one night in the Big Valley of central Pennsylvania. A ten-year-old Amish boy is critically injured in one of the fires. Jacob Hostetler, a young Amish man who left home months ago, is the prime suspect. What happens to a youth who leaves his Amish community, tempted by the outside world? This novel accurately depicts the simple and faithful lives of the Amish in the complicated 1990s.

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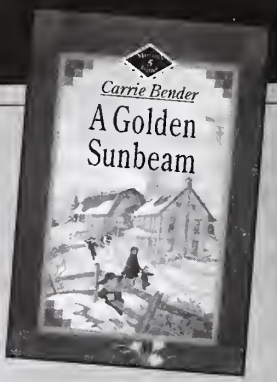

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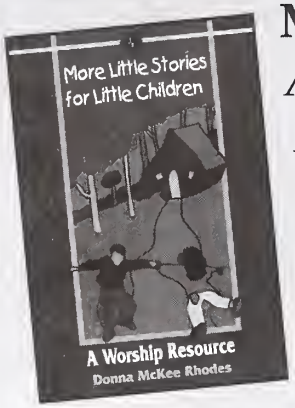

More Little Stories for Little Children
A Worship Resource

Donna McKee Rhodes

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The groans of an Omega

We groan and we sigh, Lord. We are also waiting. But we have not given up hope in your promises about our future destiny.

by Moses Slabaugh

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.—Rom. 8:22-23

Lord, we live in a groaning world. It's a cosmic groan. You understand why we groan, waiting, when such a glorious promise is in our future. So great, Lord, is your longing for your creation's redemption that you did not spare your only Son. Surely even he groaned in the garden and while on the cross.

Perhaps you, Lord, experienced that first groaning. You made a wonderful world and people in your own image. You made everything good, and then we all turned out to be rascals. And, Lord, what about the Flood? You were sorry you made us, but then you gave us a rainbow to remind us you would never destroy the earth by flood again.

All these years you and we have groaned. That is why, Lord, I want to talk to you about the millions of us who are old Omegas.

Lord, you know all 600 or more people who live here at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community. The management here prints colorful, glossy brochures advertising the advantages and comforts of Park Place, where I live. But no brochures can include what happens six or seven years after one moves in.

My wife and I did so about five years ago. We appreciated the care and comfort. But since June she lives in the Alzheimer unit. Someone has described this type of unit as a place where "mirth is not laughter and thought is not mind." It is like a funeral that never ends. It's a groaning experience, Lord. I am lonely. But this experience makes me trust the Good Shepherd more.

The people who come to live at Park Place are veterans of the aging process. They know they are probably facing the last miles of the journey. But they face life with courage and hope and faith. They are making the most of the rest of life. We enjoy the fellowship of growing older together and sustain each other—looking to the future.

Gerontologists talk about the golden years, but some of us haven't found gold. Lord, you can taunt me, because I myself have spoken about growing old gracefully and creatively. I still believe in what I said, but now that I am old for the first time, I wonder about my gracefulness and creativity. How do you walk gracefully or creatively with a walker? Wheelchairs, walkers, and canes are a common sight where I live.

We groan when the doctor reports cancer, and we groan about the chemotherapy—the hair drops out. Some go to the hospital with a stroke or heart attack. Others are plagued with arthritis, back problems, or hip and leg problems. These villains to our bodies are as greedy as the grave to turn us into dust and, like death, are never satisfied. Lord, you understand why these Omegas groan. Michael rows his boat about every month.

Lord, you know my worst groans a few months ago. (I think Michael was at the dock

(continued on page 8)

World Methodist Council elects first woman chair

The World Methodist Council has elected Frances Alguire of the United Methodist Church in the United States as its chair. Alguire is the first woman to serve as chair for the 115-year-old organization. Some 2,700 people attended the world conference held in Rio de Janeiro on Aug. 8-15. Delegates brought with them funds from their home churches for the street children of Brazil, collecting a total of $204,000 (U.S.) for their Brazilian host church for that work. Executive secretary Joe Hale challenged the delegates to "bring to birth a heritage of love and forgiveness which can be passed on to the next generation." He also urged them to "become an antidote to the virulence of war" and to "replace the ancient heritage of war with a new heritage of peace."—*Mennonite World Conference*

German druggist makes bell of peace from war ammunition

Pharmacist Rainer Schunk of Wurzburg, Germany, is manufacturing a bell from World War II ammunition as a symbol of reconciliation between previously warring countries. A company that converts armament products into other objects will process the needed copper. The bell will be hung in a Protestant church in Wurzburg or at a mass grave near the main cemetery.

—*Trancontinental Peace Newsletter*

Teen sentenced for setting fire to Mennonite store in Wisconsin

A teenager who admitted setting fire to a Mennonite-owned store near Withee, Wisc., was recently sentenced to five years in prison. Nelson Eberly, 18, says he burned the store because he wasn't hired for a job and because he felt the prices were too high. Eberly pleaded guilty to arson and no contest to obstructing a police officer in the Oct. 5, 1995, fire at Henne Supply.

Causing more than $100,000 in damage, the fire was first investigated as a possible hate crime against the Mennonites. Eberly had once been a member of this plain-dressing group, officials say, but he had been excommunicated.

—*Tribune News Service*

Civil rights commission reports on church burnings

Racial tensions, highlighted by the wave of predominantly black church burnings, need increased attention at the local level, says Mary Frances Berry, chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. In an October news conference held by the fact-finding panel about the burnings, Berry pointed to racial problems that occurred during efforts to rebuild some of the churches. "In some communities, white and black ministers and church members were working to rebuild the churches and to address racial tensions," she said. "In other communities, except for one or two ministers or public officials, the only whites who became involved were from outside the area who came as a matter of conscience."

Berry said she was surprised at the depth of racial separation in some of the towns studied by the commission. When she heard conversations about the "black swimming pool" and the "white swimming pool" in one county in Alabama, Berry said, "I thought, 'Is this 1930?' Some of that really was shocking."—*Christian Century*

The groans of an Omega

(continued from page 7)

getting his boat ready.) I landed in the hospital with low sodium in my body. In my delirium I talked about erratic ideas that made my family call a psychiatrist. I drew a vertical line on a sheet of paper, and on one side I put down reasons why I should live. On the other side I listed reasons why I should die.

Today I recall two reasons I thought then why I should die. I had no salvage value, and I would forever be with the Lord. On the other side—why I should live—I listed my family. I love them all. They have been more than kind and good to two old people.

After a few days I could think more rationally again. I recall my question to the psychiatrist: "Why should a man my age, with no salvage value, want to live?" He had a ready answer, one word: "Life."

Life *is* a miracle and a gift from God, I thought —even eternal life! A few days later my daughter called from Canada. It was near midnight. "Dad," she said. "What's this I hear about your having no salvage value? Why, that is junkyard language."

That did it. I began to think rationally again. Thank you, doctor. Thank you, Ellen. Thank you, God.

We are waiting, Lord. We have not given up hope in the promises you give us regarding the future. Why do we not hear more eschatology? Why should we not be more interested in our eternal destiny?

Lord, I believe an elderly woman in Louisiana expresses the sentiments of all your children in this world. She was buried under a live oak and on her tombstone was the word, "Waiting."

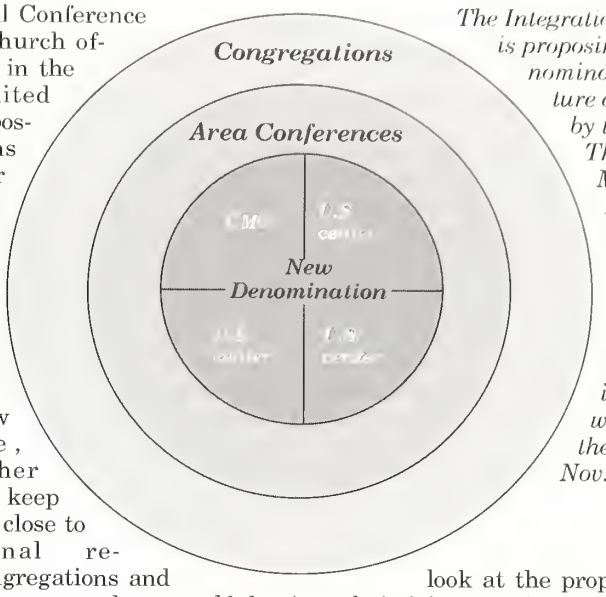
Moses Slabaugh lives in Harrisonburg, Va. Before retirement, he pastored at Lindale Mennonite Church. Now, he says, "I'm just another Omega wrestling with the niggling doubts of old age."

Integration Committee agrees on model featuring regional centers for new denomination

Chicago, Ill.—The Integration Committee (IC) agreed on conceptual models for a new denominational structure during meetings here, Oct. 11-12.

IC members are proposing a model that shows the importance of congregations and conferences in an integrated denomination *(see illustration)*. Within a large circle, congregations, is a smaller circle representing area conferences that congregations have organized to maximize their mission. Within those circles is another circle divided into parts that represent the relatively smaller structure of the denomination.

Four regional centers. A key element in this model is the inclusion of denominational centers set in several regions. Congregations and conferences could access the resource of the new denomination through these centers. The model assumed a minimum of four centers: Winnipeg, Man. (Conference of Mennonites in Canada office); Elkhart, Ind. (Mennonite Church office); Newton, Kan. (General Conference Mennonite Church office); and one in the eastern United States, with possible additions of centers later in the process.



The Integration Committee is proposing a new denominational structure as illustrated by the chart. The GC and MC General Boards will consider the model Nov. 14-15, and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada will look at the proposal Nov. 22-23.

Along with the model, the IC proposed goals and strategies. They agreed that a new structure, among other things, should keep congregations close to denominational resources so congregations and area conferences can be as self-determining as possible.

The GC and MC General Boards will look at the proposed models at their joint meetings on Nov. 14-15, and the CMC General Board will consider the proposals Nov. 22-23.

IC members noted responses to the name "Mennonite Church North America" and expressed hesitations about tying the name to geography. They decided not to propose a new name until their next meeting.

The IC is proposing a General Board with primary responsibilities to include policy, vision, and assembly planning, though aspects of these might be shared by area conferences and congregations.

Question of representation. How large this board should be was a common question during the meetings. Should it represent all the area conferences and associate groups like the current MC model? The group proposed that for the first 10 years, half the General Board representatives (besides those from associate groups) would be MCs, half GCs.

Lindsey Robinson, Harrisburg, Pa., said that associate groups need to be represented on the General Board. Don Steelberg, Wichita, Kan., asked about other groups not represented, such as the various Chinese churches.

In other business, the IC heard from various subgroups and welcomed new staff members James Schrag, GC general secretary, and George Stoltzfus, MC general secretary.

Future meetings were scheduled for Feb. 28-March 1, May 9-10, and Sept. 19-20, 1997.

—*Gordon Houser*

New refugee crisis. *Bukavu, Zaire (MCC)*—This 1994 photograph was taken minutes after the Rwandan woman was reunited with her son in an orphanage in Zaire. They were separated during a desperate flight from Rwanda's civil war, and for about four months she didn't know if he was alive or dead.

Families are still often separated in their haste to escape renewed fighting. In the last two weeks, fighting between Zairian military and Banyamulenge (Zairian Tutsis) in eastern Zaire has uprooted a half million people—Burundian and Rwandan refugees and Zairian villagers. Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers who left Bukavu Oct. 27 and are now in Kenya, describe the situation as "catastrophic." Food supplies are low, and crucial supply roads have been cut off. The United Nations and other aid agencies have evacuated staff.

Terry Sawatsky, MCC Africa program director, says the situation in eastern Zaire is "as serious as anything in the region since 1994, with the potential to be even worse." In July 1994, about 1.2 million Rwandans fled to eastern Zaire, escaping their country's civil war. Thousands died of cholera in overcrowded refugee camps. Since that time, the refugees have been living in some 40 camps scattered along Zaire's border with Rwanda and Burundi.

MCC plans to ship clothing and blankets to victims of this latest crisis in the Rwanda-Burundi-eastern Zaire area. MCC is also accepting funds for assistance that is still being determined; checks can be marked "Central Africa Healing Fund."

'We call this peace?'

Mennonite Central Committee delegation visits Gaza and West Bank

East Jerusalem, West Bank (MCC)—"In the West . . . we have allowed ourselves to feel relief that peace has finally come to the Middle East," said Patricia Shelly, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) country representative to the West Bank. "The reality is that people cannot get to work. People cannot feed their families. Students cannot get to the university. We call this peace? We have been blinded for wanting!"

Shelly was part of a four-member MCC delegation that visited the West Bank and Gaza Oct. 7-12. The delegation went in response to an appeal by the Palestinian Non-governmental Organization Network for an active assessment of the deteriorating situation in Palestine due to the Israeli military "siege" imposed on the West Bank in late September.

"People are afraid," said Father Mussallem, longtime MCC partner and director of the Latin Patriarchate school in Gaza City. "When you see [Israeli] tanks surrounding the city, what can you say? That this is peace? Some 1,500 people were injured in Gaza alone. This was not a 'clash.' It was a war."

Christian leaders did not mince words. Father Ibrahim Ayyad, a Latin Catholic priest in Beit Jala, told the delegation, "With all due respect to my American friends, egoistic and selfish interests drive the U.S. policy in this region. . . . The United States defends human rights in selective ways."

Not in the headlines. Members of the delegation agreed on the importance of raising awareness of the current situation in the West Bank and Gaza; recognizing, understanding, and confessing the role North Americans have played in the suffering; and strengthening efforts to stand in solidarity with local Christians.

Religious and political leaders in the Palestinian community named these long-standing obstacles to peace: Israeli settlement expansion, Israeli claims to exclusive sovereignty over Jerusalem, Israeli control over water resources, failure to release Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, and particularly the restricted movement of people and goods across Israeli-controlled borders.

The Israeli-imposed closure is not new. Since the beginning of the Oslo negotiations three years ago, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have suffered from limited movement of people and goods through Israeli-controlled checkpoints. The economic impact of the closure is severe. Unemployment hovers at 50-65 percent when Palestinian workers cannot cross the border into Israel. During the recent "siege," unemployment soared to 95 percent in Bethlehem. Movement of people and goods is prevented at the Israeli checkpoints.

"We talk about the violent clashes and 'future violence,' " said team member Bill Janzen of MCC Ottawa's office. "But the violence that never makes the headlines is the long-standing brutality and economic hardship caused by the closure and continued Israeli military occupation."—*Carmen Pauls*

CPT tries to reach goal of 12 full-time members

Chicago, Ill. (CPT)—The steering committee of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is making the recruitment of a 12-person full-time corps its highest priority.

"CPT has been successful beyond our best expectations," said director Gene Stoltzfus in a report to CPT's 13-member steering committee meeting in Chicago in October. "However, we are at the point of being in over our heads."

Full-time Christian Peacemaker Corps (CPC) persons are the backbone of CPT and provide leadership and stability in situations of violent crisis. Without CPCers, other volunteers cannot carry on their work.

CPT is an initiative of Mennonite and Brethren congregations and Friends meetings. CPT has violence-deterring projects in Haiti, the West Bank city of Hebron, and Washington, D.C., and has received urgent invitations from groups working in Chechnya, Bosnia, Chiapas, and various cities throughout the United States.

Unable as yet to reach the goal of 12 full-time CPC members (currently there are seven), steering committee member John Stoner acknowledged, "CPTers are overextended, besieged, and beleaguered in situations where three try to do the work of ten and there is no one available for situations that cry out for hundreds."

The steering committee decided to continue projects in Haiti and Hebron and start a domestic project in a U.S. city in the next year.

"If Christians with deep commitments to peace in the U.S. and Canada would contribute a similar amount to peacemaking that is sent to the Pentagon and to Ottawa in the form of taxes for military budgets, we could begin to talk seriously about a nonviolent army," said CPT chair Cliff Kindy.

Currently 83 congregations budget support for CPT. One congregation recently announced its intention to budget $3,000 for CPT this coming year. CPTers have to raise most of their own funds.

Native Mennonites plan special day of prayer

Elkhart, Ind. (UNMC)—A Native American Day of Prayer is scheduled for Nov. 17. The United Native Ministries Council, meeting in Atmore, Ala., on Oct. 17-20, is sponsoring the day as part of November activities of Native American Month, designated by the U.S. Congress.

The council is inviting Mennonite churches to join them in special times of prayer for the needs of Native communities. They have asked for prayer for:

- The empowering of the Holy Spirit for those who have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- The anointing of pastors and others in leadership.
- Answers to the great economic needs in most communities with 70-80 percent unemployment.
- Renewed courage and faith for Native people who have four times the average suicide rate among teenagers and adults.
- Victory over alcoholism which averages 80 percent in Native communities.
- The United Native Ministries Council and its work with Mennonite-related fellowships and churches.

Steve Cheramie Risingsun (right), chair of the Houma tribe and pastor of Native Christian Fellowship, works with Houma tribal leaders Sidney and Mandy Verdin, who live on a bayou near Houma, La.

Houma people inherit heritage of injustice

Houma, La. (MBM)—In this city of 100,000 named for his people, Steve Cheramie Risingsun finds little presence of what has become known as the Houma Nation. Risingsun is tribal chair of the Houma Nation, an aboriginal people native to the bayou region of southeast Louisiana.

But there is neither tribal land, an office, nor even a community center. "There are between 6,000 and 7,000 urbanized Indian people, but there is no facility available for urban Indians," says Risingsun, who is developing a new congregation, Native Christian Fellowship, that could provide such a place of gathering *(see article on right)*.

The feeling of being left with no ground to stand on, however, is one that is familiar to the Houma people. When Spanish explorers first visited in 1541 and French explorers came in 1682, about 12,000 aboriginal people lived in what is now Louisiana, in villages on the banks of rivers and bayous. They belonged to about 40 tribes.

Driven off again. As more Europeans settled, these native groups were forced into the less-desirable bayou regions. In the early 1900s, they were again driven off the land to which they had retreated when oil was first discovered in south Louisiana and when large oil companies gained title to land that was in native hands for generations.

Today, Risingsun estimates that about 60 percent of the Native American people in the region survive by hunting, fishing, and trapping.—*Tom Price*

Native Christian Fellowship fosters Anabaptism and Houma culture

Gretna, La. (MBM)—Melanie Domangue describes with pride how her 2-year-old son, Brandon, last winter was named "Spirit Dancer" in a Christian baby dedication patterned after an ancient Native American child-blessing ceremony. "It was like a way of entry into the community," says Domangue, who descends from the Houma tribe. "My father is Indian. But the way he was raised, they denied their heritage."

Domangue's parents were told that, in order to become Christians, they must cease to be Indian. "Any religion that tells me I shouldn't pursue my culture, my heritage . . . " Domangue says, pausing to consider her response, "I would be afraid of it."

Domangue participates in the new Native Christian Fellowship here. With cell groups for Bible study and prayer in the bayous near Houma, La., and in the urban areas near New Orleans, this congregation allows aboriginal people to come to Christ without abandoning their culture at the church door.

> ***'You can use the [sweat lodge] ceremony to call forth evil spirits. . . or you can go in there and sing praises to Jesus with gospel hymns.'***
>
> ***—Steve Cheramie Risingsun***

"There is a need in the Indian community to allow them to be Indians but also to allow their Christian faith to be expressed through their native customs and a need to develop an indigenous theology among the native cultures," says Steve Cheramie Risingsun, chair of the Houma tribe and pastor of Native Christian Fellowship. With support from Mennonite Board of Missions, the Gulf States Mennonite Conference, United Native Ministries Council, and the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council, Risingsun is developing a new, distinctly Anabaptist model for a Native church.

Risingsun, who served from 1988-1991 as pastor of North Cheyenne Mennonite Church in Ashland, Mont., closely studies traditional Indian ceremonies and practices to see which he can use with good conscience in a Christian congregation. The baby dedication ceremony he guided for Brandon Domangue incorporated elements of Houma tribal heritage that Risingsun believes point to Jesus.

This approach directly contrasts with many Protestant churches, including a nondenominational congregation which Risingsun once served as an associate pastor. The requirements imposed upon Native people who wanted to become Christians were "asking them to deny their culture" and remove almost everything from their lives, according to Risingsun. "We just don't feel it is conducive to leave that cultural void in their lives," he says.

Native Christian Fellowship now averages about 40 people in its meetings on Sunday mornings and Tuesday nights in West Bank, a New Orleans-area neighborhood. This location will provide one of two "hubs" for prayer and Bible-study cell groups that will meet in urban homes. The other hub, based about 50 miles away in Houma, La., will try to draw many of the Houma-Chitimacha people who live in impoverished bayou communities, such as Isle De Jean Charles, where more than half of the 200 people cannot read or write their names.

The church is growing, according to Allan Yoder, who leads MBM's church development efforts. "He [Risingsun] is pulling together a lot of the young Native Americans in one congregation by using a number of the Houma traditions he feels are compatible with Christian rites of passage."

Meanwhile, Risingsun and others are developing a philosophy of ministry, seeking to develop teaching materials about such cultural items as the sweat lodge, the pipe, and the stomp dance. "I am fully aware of the dark side of our culture . . . I am also aware that is not the whole story," Risingsun says. "The sweat lodge is just the instrument. You can use the ceremony and call forth evil spirits . . . or you can go in there and sing praises to the Father and Jesus with gospel hymns."—*Tom Price*

Rural Canton church provides meat and more

Canton, Pa. (EMM)—Doug and Leona Graybill live in northern Pennsylvania, where the population of bear, deer, and turkey steadily increases while the human population continues to decrease. In this rural setting, the Graybills pastor Canton Mennonite Church, a growing Mennonite fellowship.

The couple shared their experiences at the September joint meeting of the boards of Eastern Mennonite Missions and the Lancaster Mennonite Conference bishops.

The church, which started with about 30 people, has grown to a core of 160 people and an average Sunday morning attendance of 125.

People in the church come from Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Bible Fellowship, Baptist, Wesleyan, Pentecostal, and nonchurch backgrounds. Only 25 percent of the members are of Mennonite heritage. Doug Graybill explained, "We want people to build on their ethnic and denominational backgrounds."

Demonstrating care. In the early 1980s, the Graybills planted the church in the mountainous area of Canton with a small-group emphasis. Today, about 60 percent of the congregation participate in eight small groups.

Canton, located about 45 miles north of Williamsport, boasts a population of 1,900 residents. Doug Graybill said there are many broken homes and a high incident of sexual abuse and incest. The community is economically depressed, and the average family income is $24,000.

Mike Charles, member of Canton (Pa.) Mennonite Church, services a car as part of the church's ministry to widows and single mothers.

Canton Mennonite has practical ways of demonstrating care for its people and reaching their needs. Ten percent of the offerings received are used for ministry within the congregation. Several men in the church have started a car-care clinic for widows and single mothers. They service and repair the cars, and the congregation covers whatever costs are beyond the individual's abilities.

In the fall of 1995, the congregation decided to provide meat to any family that needed it. Because of low prices, the church decided to purchase cows from their dairy farmers and process the meat into hamburger. The meat is placed in the church freezer, and people who need meat can help themselves.

Members of the congregation also reach out to the community through the local prison ministry, pregnancy care center, and a project that provides gifts to children whose parents are in prison.

The Graybills said it is important to involve as many people as possible in the life of the congregation and worship services. "It should be a family atmosphere, enjoying and celebrating our salvation," said Doug Graybill.—*Carol L. Wert*

EMM adopts statement of vision for mission work

Salunga, Pa. (EMM)—The executive committee of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), Salunga, Pa., and the bishop board of Lancaster Mennonite Conference have adopted an EMM vision statement to help guide their mission work into the 21st century.

"We see this statement as a challenge to ourselves to embrace once again the cross of Christ in a whole new way—or in an old way," said EMM president Richard Showalter. "We don't believe this vision will be realized apart from suffering love and costly discipleship," he added.

The vision statement emerged from a retreat last October when the executive committee and EMM senior staff members spent time praying about the future focus of EMM. Showalter sees the statement being different from the organization's mission statement. A vision statement has not been written before at EMM.

The priorities in an abbreviated version of the vision statement are to: focus special attention on unreached people groups, develop regional centers for mission, train thousands of youth and young adults, mobilize senior adults for mission and service, and send a missionary from every congregation.

The *Missionary Messenger,* EMM's missions news magazine, will focus several issues in 1997 on the priorities mentioned in the vision statement.

—*Carol L. Wert*

Deer Creek Mennonites celebrate 150 years

Kalona, Iowa—The Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church hosted a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the oldest Old Order Amish community west of the Mississippi on two weekends in October.

Panel discussions and two speeches highlighted the Oct. 4-5 weekend. Steve Reschly, professor of history at Truman University, Kirksville, Mo., spoke on "Iowa and the Revolving Door of Amish Migration," and John Sharp, director of the Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Ind., spoke on "Iowa Mennonites: Shaping the Church."

A six-member panel from the Deer Creek area held a discussion about changes to the area such as the railroad, school consolidation, revival meetings, and urbanization.

"Reliving Historical Moments" was the theme of the Oct. 11-12 weekend. A series of monologues portraying Amish-Mennonite pioneers were written and presented by descendants of the early settlers.—*David Groh*

- **Service projects planned.** Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) is setting up service opportunities for youth groups that will be in Florida for the biennial assembly of the Mennonite Church, July 29-Aug. 2, 1997. Jorge Vallejos, director of short-term service, is arranging work projects in both Orlando and Tampa for before, during, and after the Orlando 97 convention. Vallejos says he expects 3,000-4,000 youth to respond to the invitation to service.

- **Hondurans buy land.** Mennonite Central Committee is providing $20,000 (U.S.) to the Honduran Mennonite Church for the purchase of a title of a piece of land with a partly-unoccupied retreat center that was recently overrun by squatters. The church learned they did not possess full title to the land. With the MCC funds, the church will secure title to the retreat center grounds as well as additional land. The church's long-term goal is to help the squatters develop a community, assist with development projects, and begin the legal process of transferring titles to the new settlers.

- **Haiti delegation leaves.** A six-member Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation left for Haiti on Oct. 20 for a 10-day trip to meet with Haitian church workers, community leaders, and government officials. "At a time of increasing insecurity and violent attacks in Haiti, it is important to let the Haitian people know that they are not alone," says Jay Stackhouse, a member of the delegation.

- **AMBS offers January classes.** Six short courses, including a study tour related to Mennonite World Conference, are being offered by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., during the January 1997 interterm. The classes run from Jan. 5 to 24 or Jan. 13 to 24. More information is available from Andrew Kreider at 219 295-3726.

- **Fresno president resigns.** Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College president Richard Kriegbaum announced his resignation on Oct. 11, effective June 30, 1997. He became president in 1985. The board of trustees has established a search committee for his successor.

- **Pastors' Week looks at stories.** "Story Shaping Faith: The Power of Story in Ministry" is the theme of the annual Pastors' Week at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Jan. 27-31, 1997. The week features speakers, worship, and workshops centered on the power of stories in communicating faith, preaching and teaching, pastoral counseling, and mission and ministries. Biblical storyteller John Shea will lead the plenary sessions each morning. A gathering of women pastors will be coordinated by Nina Lanctot. More information is available from 800 946-2676.

Canners jump into 1996 season. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers (from left) Mark Gingerich, Anthony Beery, and Rudi Niessen demonstrate the operation of the MCC canner at an Oct. 17 commissioning service here. The canner and crew will travel to approximately 30 locations in 11 states over the next six months. With the help of local volunteers and using donated meat, the unit will likely process more than 230 tons of meat, some of which is destined for refugees in war-torn Bosnia.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Douglas D.H. Kaufman was ordained at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa. on Oct. 13.

Mark Akers began as pastor at Homestead (Fla.) Mennonite Church on Aug. 1. His new address is 446 NW 17th Court, Homestead, FL 33033.

Ed Robbins was installed as pastor of Parkview (Ind.) Mennonite Church on Oct. 6 by Del Glick. His new address is 1408 N. Wabash Ave., Kokomo, IN 46901.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Juliana Clemmer began a Service Adventure term in Champaign, Ill., with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

Jonica Fassett began an MBM Service Adventure term in Philippi, W.Va.

Mark Grubaugh began an MBM Service Adventure term in Champaign, Ill.

Valerie Haarer began an MBM Service Adventure term in Philippi, W.Va.

Lyle Hartt began an MBM Service Adventure term in Philippi, W.Va.

Andrea King began an MBM Service Adventure term in Champaign, Ill.

Rod Kiogima began an MBM Service Adventure term in Champaign, Ill.

Amber Levengood began an MBM Service Adventure term in Champaign, Ill.

James Rediger began an MBM Service Adventure term in Philippi, W.Va.

Rose Reznicsek began an MBM Service Adventure term in Champaign, Ill.

Kim Waidelich began an MBM Service Adventure Term in Philippi, W.Va.

- **Coming events:**

Open House, Walden Special Care Unit, Menno Haven, Inc., Chambersburg, Pa., on Nov. 7. More information from 717 263-8545.

- **New resources:**

Integration of MC/GC Mennonite Mission, a four-page study document was recently drafted by a mission integration task force. Available from Mennonite Board of Missions, 219 294-7523.

Viviendo las Contradicciones: entre Buitres y Mariposas is the newly-released Spanish edition of *Vultures and Butterflies: Living the Contradictions* by Susan Classen. The book shares the author's reflections on her years of Mennonite Central Committee

service in Bolivia and El Salvador. Contact MCC's Latin American department at 717 859-1151.

• **Job openings:**

Director of music, Souderton Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa. Responsibilities include directing congregational choir, planning for worship music, and development of vocal and instrumental gifts of congregation. Two-fifths time, available immediately. Contact Joy Sawatzky 215 723-3088.

Director of Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont. Responsibilities include teaching in peace and conflict studies and administering an international internship program. Qualifications include administrative, teaching, and research abilities, and practical experience in one of the program's areas of focus: conflict resolution; issues of war, peace, and justice; international justice and development issues. Doctorate preferred. Position opens July 1, 1997; application deadline is Dec. 1. Send letter of application, résumé, and three references to Hildi Froese Tiessen, chair of the selection committee, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6.

Administrator, Shalom Christian Academy, Chambersburg, Pa. For more information, call 717 762-0230.

Art director/graphic artist, Ten Thousand Villages, a program of Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa. Qualifications include college degree in graphics or fine arts, experience with art direction, graphic design (MAC, Quark Express, pre-production), and identity design systems. Call 717 859-1151.

Middle school teacher, Lititz (Pa.) Mennonite School. Instruction of 7th and 8th grade language arts and 6th grade science. Qualifications include language arts background and skills in computer and communication. Call 717 626-9551.

NEW MEMBERS

Bethel, West Liberty, Ohio: Jason Headings, Russell Krabill, and Lee Wirick.

Emmanuel, Gainesville, Fla.: Prentice "Skip" Wheeler and Karen Wheeler.

Eugene, Ore.: Andrew Elliott and David Hockman-Wert.

Maple Grove, Belleville, Pa.: Larry J. Yoder.

Shalom, Newton, Kan.: Becky Hofkamp.

Sharon, Plain City, Ohio: David T. Erb and Sandra D. Erb.

Zion, Broadway, Va.: Louis F. Skillman, Elizabeth D. Skillman, Anne Callie Skillman, Sarah Chapple Skillman, David J. Gullman, and Debbie Y. Gullman.

BIRTHS

Beachy, Jodi Hostetler and Jeff, Plain City, Ohio, Nicholas Joseph (first child), Sept. 4.

Benner, Clara Nunez and Kendall, Souderton, Pa., Erika Nicole (second child), Oct. 4.

Brenneman, Terri Plank and Jim, Pasadena, Calif., Quinn Miguel (first child), July 24.

Cameron, Margie K. and Scott, Los Angeles, Calif., Madeleine Elizabeth (first child), July 14.

Carey, Cheryl Kreider and Kevin, Falls Church, Va., James Justin (first child), Oct. 3.

Charles, Kristine Kopp and Thomas, Pittsburgh, Pa., Luke Christopher (second child), Oct. 8.

Detweiler, Becky Rittenhouse and Merlin, Hickory, N.C., Andrea Jewel (third child), Sept. 15.

Gingrich, Rhonda Ballantyne and Darrell, Arthur, Ont., Conner Brent (second child), Sept. 4.

Heddin, Frances Hermstein and Jonathan, Hesston, Kan., Mikala Marie (first child), Oct. 11.

Helm, Kathi Toelke and Richard, New Castle, Va., Levi Toelke (second child), April 18.

Hill, Linda and Stewart, Line Lexington, Pa., Michaela Mae (second child), Sept. 27.

Jones, Anita Brubaker and Kim, Edmonton, Alta., Riley Carlene (first child), Oct. 6.

King, Cynthia Bauman and John, Sellersville, Pa., Jesse Glenn (second child), Oct. 14.

Maust, Emily Burkholder and Brent, Bay Port, Mich., Emma Rebekah (first child), Sept. 15.

Miller, Laura Chua and Darryl, Plain City, Ohio, Emily Renee (second child), Oct. 3.

Miller, Janie Sauers and Steven, Mifflinburg, Pa., Trent Colton (fourth child), Oct. 3.

Neer, Angela Yoder and Paul, Belleville, Pa., Silas Lynn (first child), Aug. 7.

Peachey, Sandra Wert and Donald, Belleville, Pa., Garrett Lee (second child), Sept. 9.

Rabenstein, Sandy Wilson and Steve, West Liberty, Ohio, Abigail Elaine (first child), Oct. 11.

Shepard, Amy Wineland and David, Plain City, Ohio, Tyler David (first child), June 8.

Shisler, Joanna Bergey and Matthew, Franconia, Pa., Mattasyn Kaylee (first child), Oct. 12.

Valentine, Linda James and Les, Christiansburg, Va., Joelle Ruth (fifth child), April 5.

Yoder, Janet King and Denton, Shawsville, Va., Jake King (second child), July 20.

MARRIAGES

Batchelor-Bauman: Dana Batchelor, Elmira, Ont. (Floradale), and Steven Bauman, Elmira, Ont. (Floradale), Oct. 12, by Fred Redekop.

Beachy-Buckwalter: Mike Beachy, Greenwood, Del. (Greenwood), and Darlene Buckwalter, Greenwood, Del. (Norma), Aug. 10, by Tom Schultz.

Burkey-Mishler: Kari Burkey, Berlin, Ohio (Baptist), and Nevin Mishler, Walnut Creek, Ohio (Walnut Creek), Oct. 12, by Wendell Beal and Ross A. Miller.

Chisenhall-Layton: Tammy Lee Chisenhall, Greenwood, Del. (Tressler), and Karl Layton, Greenwood, Del. (Church of the Brethren), Aug. 24, by Lowell Bechtel.

Clemmer-Richard: Tinus Clemmer, Floradale, Ont. (Floradale), and Sheri Richard, Elmira, Ont. (Woodside Bible Chapel), Sept. 14, by Fred Redekop.

Czosnowski-Ramer: Paul Czosnowski, South Bend, Ind. (Kern Road), and Jolene Ramer, South Bend, Ind. (Kern Road), Sept. 28, by David and Janice Yordy Sutter.

Gingerich-Talbot: Kevin Gingerich, Zurich, Ont. (Zurich), and Kelly Talbot, Exeter, Ont. (United), Sept. 21, by Cordell Parsons.

Horner-Myers: Don Horner, Kokomo, Ind. (Howard-Miami), and Elsie Myers, Kokomo, Ind. (Howard-Miami), Sept. 21, by Lee Miller.

Hummel-Wideman: Jeff Hummel, Toronto, Ont. (United), and Anne Wideman, Toronto, Ont. (Floradale), Sept. 7, by Fred Redekop.

Hunsberger-Oberg: Angela Hunsberger, Telford, Pa. (Line Lexington), and Anton Oberg, Jokkmokk, Sweden (Salem), Sept. 28, by Tom Rutschman.

Irvine-Martin: Brenda Irvine, Elmira, Ont. (Presbyterian), and Reg Martin, Elmira, Ont. (Floradale), Sept. 28, by Fred Redekop.

Link-Stoltzfus: Angela Link, Morgantown, Ind. (Bean Blossom), and Daniel Stoltzfus, Goshen, Ind. (Waterford), Aug. 3, by Lloyd L. Miller.

MacLean-Siebert: Kathy MacLean, Kitchener, Ont. (Freedom in Christ Assembly), and Jared Siebert, Zurich, Ont. (Zurich), Aug. 30, by Norman MacLean (father of the bride).

Markin-Mast: Traci Markin, London, Ohio (United Methodist), and Matthew Mast, London, Ohio (Sharon), July 20, by Howard S. Schmitt.

Miller-Struble: Keith Miller, Kokomo, Ind. (Howard-Miami), and Kate Struble, Peru, Ind. (Catholic), Aug. 24, by Lee Miller and Virgil Barker.

Moore-Showalter: Scott Moore, Broadway, Va., and Elyzabeth Showalter, Broadway, Va. (Zion), Oct. 12, by Richard K. Early.

Pauls-Schmidt: Adeline Pauls, Inman, Kan. (Hoffnungsau) and Wilbur Schmidt, Hesston, Kan. (Whitestone), Oct. 12, by Dean Linsenmeyer.

DEATHS

Blucker, Dorothy George, 88, Nappanee, Ind. Born: Oct. 4, 1907, Kosciusko County, Ind., to Frank and Elizabeth Heckaman George. Died: Oct. 2, 1996, Elkhart, Ind. Survivors—daughter: Betty Murphy; 2 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: William Blucker (husband) and Kenneth Eugene Mishler (son). Congregational membership: North Main Street Mennonite Church. Funeral: Oct. 5, Thompson and Yoder Funeral Home, by Ken Bontreger. Burial: Bremen Cemetery.

Burbank, Bertha K. Alderfer, 72, Phoenix, Ariz. Born: Dec. 5, 1923, Harleysville, Pa., to Horace A. and Bertha Keller Alderfer. Died: Oct. 7, 1996, Phoenix, Ariz., of Lou

Some assembly required. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—Sherrill Glanzer (with balloons), of the local coordinating committee of Peace Factory, says that the interactive exhibit attracted more than a thousand visitors during a stint Oct. 6-13 at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. The massive display has been on an extended tour of the United States and Canada since its premiere at Mennonite General Assembly in July 1995. More than 100 volunteers built the exhibit and donated all materials.

The exhibit helps visitors connect personal faith with practical peacemaking. Activities include storytelling, playdough sculptures, coloring, letter writing, and computer games on conflict resolution.—*Jim Bishop*

Gehrig's disease. Survivors—husband: Naswood Burbank; sons: Michael, Timothy; brothers and sisters: Linford, Wellington, Horace, Pearl Leatherman, Frances Alderfer, Miriam Benner; one grandchild. Predeceased by: Pamela (infant daughter). Funeral: Oct. 11, Grace Mennonite Church, by James L. Kropf and Stanley Weaver. Burial: Body donated for medical research.

Cender, Edna Lorine Heiser, 78, Fisher, Ill. Born: Feb. 5, 1918, Fisher, Ill., to Joseph and Fannie Schrock Heiser. Died: Aug. 6, 1996, Fisher, Ill. Survivors—husband: Alva Cender; children: John, Mark, Mary Alene Miller, Annette Williams, Kathy Martin, Ruth Ellen Reaves; sisters: Alta Detweiler, Mabel Teuscher; 13 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 10, East Bend Mennonite Church, by Calvin Kaufman and Michael Dean. Burial: East Bend Memorial Gardens.

Erisman, Emma King, 100, Inglewood, Calif. Born: Aug. 25, 1896, Monterey, Pa., to Aaron S. and Lydia Fisher King. Died: Oct. 9, 1996, West Los Angeles, Calif. Survivors—children: Edna, Henry; 5 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Harry Erisman (husband). Funeral and burial: Oct. 12, Chapel of the Chimes, Inglewood Park Cemetery, by Randy Hill.

Fisher, Miriam Garber Longenecker, 78, Lancaster, Pa. Born: Dec. 31, 1917, West Donegal Twp., Pa., to Ira L. and Ellen E. Garber Longenecker. Died: Oct. 8, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—husband: J. Herbert Fisher, Sr.; children: J. Herbert Jr., J. Harold, Kenneth L., Karl L., Marianne L. Weaver, Marilyn L. Hollinger; foster daughter: Patricia L. Henderson; 16 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Janet Louise Fisher (daughter). Funeral and burial: Oct. 12, Millersville Mennonite Church, by Abram Charles and Delbert Kautz.

Johnson, Ralph C., 79, Moorhead, Minn. Born: Jan. 13, 1917, Coalridge, Mont. Died: Oct. 20, 1996, Moorhead, Minn. Survivors—wife: Elaine Storm Johnson; children: Norma, Roger, Eugene, Ralph, Tim; brothers and sisters: Fay, Kenny, Earl, Alice Danielson, Marie Kanagy, Grace Schantz; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23, Martin's Lutheran Church. Burial: Casselton Cemetery.

Kauffman, Floyd, 89, Nappanee, Ind. Born: Aug. 19, 1907, Middlebury, Ind., to Andrew and Polly Hershberger Kauffman. Died: Oct. 6, 1996, Elkhart, Ind. Survivors—wife: Jennie "Jane" Sweigart Kauffman; children: Judith Robinson, Dennis; 8 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 11, North Main Street Mennonite Church, by Ken Bontreger. Burial: Union Center Cemetery.

Landvater, Jacob R., 85, Elizabethtown, Pa. Born: April 19, 1911, Elizabethtown, Pa., to Harry R. and Anna Bleacher Landvater. Died: Oct. 16, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Fannie L. Hess Landvater; children: Ruthanne Herr, David R., James H., Kenneth R.; brother: Nathan R.; 13 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 20, Strickler Mennonite Church, by Russell Baer and Elmer Breneman. Burial: Shope's Cemetery.

Myers, Edna M., 84, Ottsville, Pa. Born: Sept. 14, 1912, New Britian Twp., Pa., to Samuel and Rosa Myers. Died: Oct. 18, 1996. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Samuel, Clayton, Florence Leatherman, Mildred Fillman, Anna Mae Krammes, Ethel Edmonds. Funeral and burial: Oct. 21, Deep Run East Mennonite Church, by Tim Weaver and Arnold Roth.

Nice, Viola L. Garges, 82, Souderton, Pa. Born: Nov. 25, 1913, Lower Salford Twp., Pa., to Abram Z. and Mamie Landis Garges. Died: Oct. 16, 1996, Sellersville, Pa. Survivors—children: Stanley and Clyde Detwiler, Louise Martin; stepdaughter: Esther Allebach; brother and sister: Abram Garges, Marian Souder; 16 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren, 7 stepgrandchildren, 11 stepgreatgrandchildren, 3 stepgreatgreat-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Willis C. Nice (second husband), Arthur M. Detwiler (first husband), Ralph Detwiler (son), and Curtis, Paul, Willis, and Claude Nice (stepsons). Funeral: Oct. 21, Franconia Mennonite Church, by John M. Ehst, Steven E. Landis, and Floyd M. Hackman. Burial: Indian Creek Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Stull, Anna, 93, Scottdale, Pa. Born: Oct. 27, 1902, Johnstown, Pa., to David A. and Mary C. Shetler Stull. Died: Oct. 16, 1996, Scottdale, Pa. Survivor—sister: Minnie O. Stull. Congregational membership: Mennonite Church of Scottdale. Funeral: Oct. 18, Kapr Funeral Home, by Doug and Wanda Roth Amstutz. Burial: Richland Cemetery.

Yoder, Katie Viola Breneman, 88, Iowa City, Iowa. Born: Feb. 5, 1908, Johnson County, Iowa, to John C. and Arminda Hochstetler Breneman. Died: Oct. 17, 1996, Iowa City, Iowa. Survivors—children: Leland "Bud", Doris, Ken; 8 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Richard D. Yoder (husband). Funeral: Oct. 20, First Mennonite Church, by Firman Gingerich and Diane Zaerr. Burial: Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Obituary correction: Willis T. Sommers (Oct. 8, 1996, *Gospel Herald*) is also survived by these children: Rhoda Bowman and Galen.

Newspaper

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Who ya gonna vote for?

Every four years, this magazine has the dubious distinction of being published the same day that millions of U.S. citizens go to the polls to choose a new president. And every four years, in the heat of the election campaign, I get asked: "When's *Gospel Herald* going to endorse a political candidate?"

The one asking usually has a mischievous smile. This year, however, I detect a bit more seriousness. A few have even hinted that if you're a Christian, there shouldn't be much doubt about which candidate would get the nod.

That's also the rhetoric I've been hearing from too much of the Christian world in the United States the past several weeks. In the preelection debate, there's been a strange blending of politics and religion, so much so that it's often difficult to distinguish one from the other. For me, the epitome of this marriage came when I saw a news report of Pat Robinson before the Christian Coalition, calling on Christians around the world to pray for a miracle. Otherwise, he said, the candidate of his choice would lose.

Of course, there's nothing new here. All U.S. election campaigns seem to take on a religious aura, with candidates lining up on one side of God or the other. (Remember how Protestants were supposed to vote against a Catholic president in the 1960s?)

Even Jesus faced the blurring of these lines. There was the day the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him, requesting that James and John have choice seats when Jesus established his political kingdom. "Woman," Jesus replied, "You don't know what you're talking about. My kingdom is not what you think. Who gets what position in it is not mine to give" (Matt. 20:20-28).

Later, when the Pharisees tried to trap him with a question about taxes—one that would have pitted the religious establishment against the political system—Jesus sidestepped getting tangled in that mess. "Show me a coin," he instructed. Then: "Let the political world do its thing. And the kingdom of God will do its" (Matt. 22:15-22).

But we continue to try to fuse the worlds of politics and religion. Often it is difficult to distinguish one from the other because both appear to be working toward the same goals.

We in the church, for example, believe in the sanctity of life. So the pressures are on for us to choose the political party or candidate most against abortion—if we can determine which that is.

We also know we should help the poor. One political party tells us its platform for welfare reform will do that best. Of course, the other one disagrees with an alternative.

And all want fewer taxes. Mennonites especially are drawn toward promises that will mean less of our money going to maintain military hardware and personnel. But if we agree on that, we surely don't agree on whether the Republicans or the Democrats will do that best.

Into this confusion, Jesus says, "My kingdom is not from this world" (John 18:36). During these days of campaign oratory, that's a healthy reminder for those of us who have declared our supreme loyalty to Jesus' kingdom. While some of what we believe and long for may be achieved through political systems, that is not where we put our ultimate loyalties. We work out our passion for life, for peace and justice, and for family values in the context of the church.

Does this mean we abandon the political system? No. Many of us believe that, as dual citizens of both a heavenly and an earthly kingdom, we can and should vote. Some of us believe we should remind the government of higher values by addressing its priorities and agendas. A few of us may even find ourselves called to work within the system itself.

However we involve ourselves in political structures, we must realize those structures are not ultimate reality. They are not even a reality equal with the kingdom of God. Thus we dare not allow what we believe politically to become division points within this kingdom.

Instead, we must work together in the church, whatever our political persuasion. Jesus has told us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the prisoners (Matt. 25:34-36). We do these neither because of or in spite of who wins this week's election. We continue to do them regardless of who is the president of the United States, the prime minister of Canada, or the ruler of any other country around the world.—*jlp*

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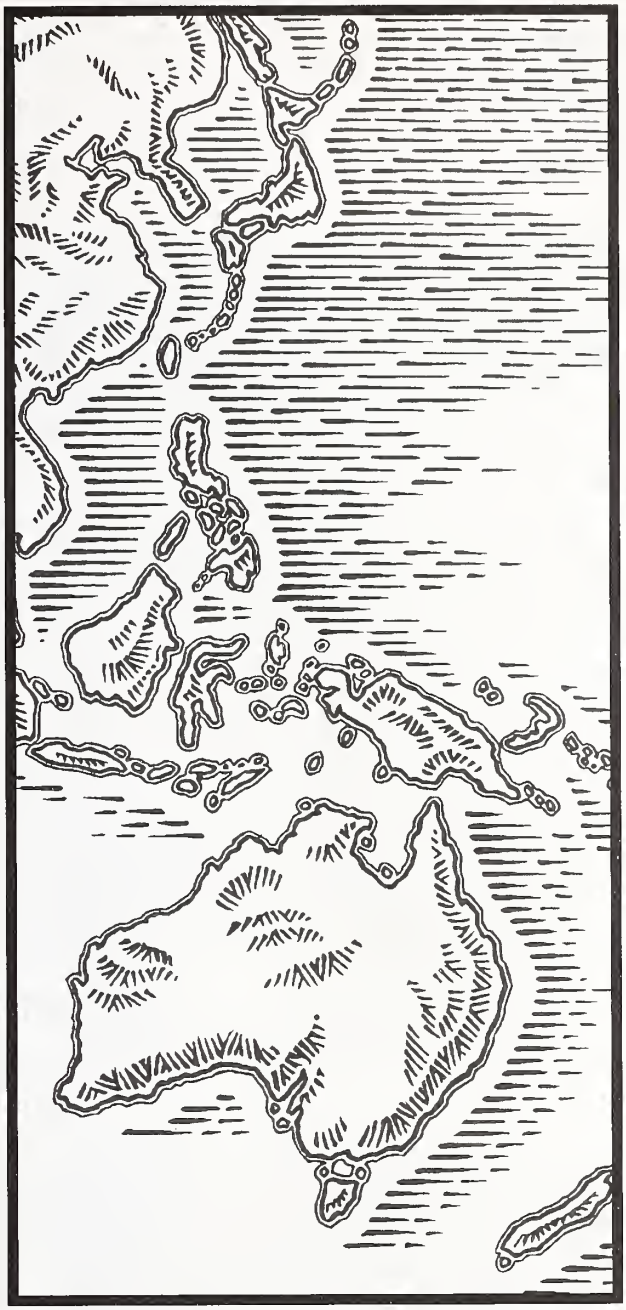
Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



November is "missions month" for the Mennonite Church: "If you are willing to listen to us, you will find that we have something worthwhile to discuss."

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Stanley W. Green:
'You have given us goods; now give us friends' 4

Wilbert R. Shenk:
What mission has done to the Mennonite church 6

Mennonite Board of Missions talks about integration options 11

MCC Atlanta unit closes:
Around a table of memories 13

'Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history'

For a long time, we in Southern Hemisphere churches have felt treated the way Alice treated the mouse—having assumptions and language set for us.

by Paulus Widjaja

In his children's book, *Alice in Wonderland,* Lewis Carroll writes of Alice's encounter with a mouse as they are trying desperately to get out of a deep pool. Alice has never spoken to a mouse before, writes Carroll, and she blunders badly in her first attempt by making references to cats and dogs—only scaring the little mouse more. Struggling to reconcile with the mouse after offending him with her words, Alice calls to him:

" 'Mouse dear! Do come back again, and we won't talk about cats or dogs either, if you don't like them.' When the Mouse heard this, it turned round and swam slowly back to her; its face was quite pale, and it said in a low trembling voice, 'Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history, and you'll understand why it is I hate cats and dogs.' "

This story illustrates the relationship between churches in the North and South of our world. For a long time, we in the southern hemisphere churches have felt hurt because the northern hemisphere churches have treated us like Alice treated the mouse. When she saw the mouse, Alice determined the language of the conversation based on her own assumptions—a language that hurt the mouse despite

We are still trying to understand the languages of the North, most of which don't make sense. Moreover, what has been communicated is often harmful.

her good intentions. The mouse came to see that they had to get to the shore before the mouse could begin to tell its story.

That's what needs to happen among Mennonites in the world today. "Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history," the churches in the two-thirds world are telling the churches in the North. "There I'll tell you my history, and you'll understand why it is that some languages of the northern churches hurt our feelings."

We are still trying to understand the languages of the Northern churches, most of which don't make much sense to us. Moreover, what has been communicated to us in foreign languages is often harmful to us. It brings denigration of our spirituality, rejection of our ethos, and alienation from our own culture.

The first language that hurts us is the language of ***individualism***. This language of "do it myself" is very evident whenever northern churches plan to start a new mission in the South. The mission agency usually does not ask for help, involvement, or even suggestions from the Mennonite churches in the surrounding area. They may give us information about what they are planning to do, but they usually go ahead and start the mission by themselves in a spirit of "this is my own business, and I can do it by myself."

This kind of spirit certainly hurts our feelings deeply and makes us feel disrespected, undervalued, and ignored. We don't see ourselves as authority figures who need to give permission to northern churches to begin missions; we merely want to be involved as part of the family.

When young lovers are planning to get married in Indonesia, they introduce the other to all family members to ask for their blessings and wisdom—not only to the members of the nuclear family, but to those of the extended family as well. The philosophy behind this practice is that marriage is not a one-to-one engagement but a family-to-family relationship. Therefore, it is very important to involve all family members in one's marriage from the very beginning. By doing this, the whole family is then bound to share the responsibility, to take care of the marriage, and to protect it. That is why we feel hurt when a mission agency is getting "married" to our neighbor, and yet they do not come to us, not even to introduce the "fiancee."

The spirit of "do it myself" is often carried by the northern churches beyond the establishment of missions. The whole matter of mission

Paulus Widjaja

Global partnership?

We're still trying

As early as the 1960s, the Muria Christian Church of Indonesia raised the issue of global partnership in mission as we were establishing our mission board. Then again in 1974, when I was in the sixth grade, our church initiated a formal round-table discussion with the northern partners from the Netherlands and North America to discuss the issue at a deep level.

Since then, we have been asked to initiate frequent contacts, physical and non-physical, with the northern churches. This, of course, is not an easy job. We have to train and prepare our leaders in foreign communications, we have to send our representatives abroad periodically, and we have to allocate our money to finance all these efforts. Communication must be done in English, and we have to allocate 3 percent of our annual budget just to pay for postage for such international communication.

Now here I am, 35 years later, the second generation in our church to carry on the issue of global partnership. After these many years, we are still trying to fulfill all the requirements that the northern churches ask—along with the necessary sacrifices.

—*Paulus Widjaja*

seems to be understood as the business of the northern churches and their missionaries. Sometimes we know almost nothing about the mission being done in our backyard. The language of "nobody should tell me what I have to do" is quite often also used in the determination of what needs to be done in the South. That we need many more church leaders who are well-educated for our mission, for instance, doesn't seem to be an important issue for the northern churches, who live in a context in which finding a leader who has even postgraduate studies background is not a problem at all.

This language of individualism, in the long run, also impacts the churches which were planted and established by the northern churches. They often remain isolated from the rest of the Mennonite families in the surrounding area. Instead of establishing a close relationship and asking for help in the time of crisis from the existing neighboring Mennonite churches, the newly established churches will be more likely to relate only to the northern churches and to ask for help only from the northern churches. Those northern churches are the only partners. Those they know since they were raised and nurtured in that attitude. Once again, we feel disrespected, undervalued, and ignored.

The second language that hurts us is the language of ***operationalism***. This is the language of "do it according to certain techniques." Mission seems to be understood primarily as a matter of techniques, procedures, and strategies. The missionaries come to our countries with a set of ready-made techniques and strategies to do mission. Many of them seem to believe that there is always a technical solution for every problem in mission, including human problems. Even contextualization of the gospel within the local culture or dialogue with people of other faiths is understood as part of the strategy in mission. Certain techniques to assure its success are therefore applied. "Technique," "procedure," and "strategy" become the magic words in mission.

Since techniques and strategy play a very important role in mission, mission is measured by empirical-quantitative parameters. This means that people are often perceived as numbers, mission becomes the business of statistics, and the world is seen through the window of percentages. It seems difficult for us to talk with the northern churches about Dahlan and Mahfud as persons whose feelings and beliefs need to be respected because the North perceives them merely as impersonal numbers that belong to a certain percentage known as Muslims. It seems that the northern churches do not have any need to get to know who Dahlan and Mahfud are, what they are feeling, what they actually believe, and how that belief affects their lives. What seems to really matter in mission is to change the statistics for the benefit of Christianity.

Consequently, the success of mission is also measured by statistics. An increase in numbers for the benefit of Christianity will be more likely to increase funding for foreign missions, but decrease in numbers will also decrease this funding. The hard struggles to teach the new believers the new set of values, the difficulties to survive amidst heavy persecution and limited resources, or the complexities of contextualizing the gospel in multiethnic settings do not seem to be considerations at all.

Global partnership in mission, logically, becomes a major problem as well when the

(continued on page 9)

Mission as partnership:

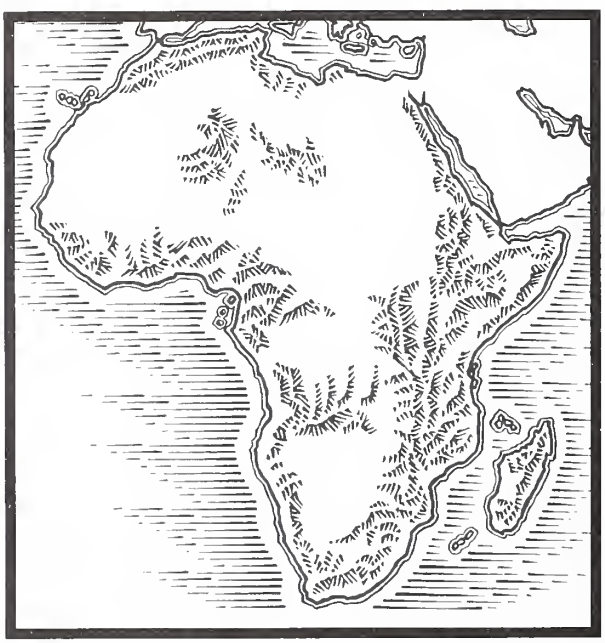
'You have given us goods. Now give

The challenge before us is to find a way for mission to emerge out of the common currency of relationships, building partnerships of mutuality around the world.

by Stanley W. Green

The first major ecumenical missions conference of this century was convened in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910. At that conference, U. S. Azariah from India said to Western mission agencies: "You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us friends."

Western mission agencies and the workers that they sent during the past two centuries almost always had a beneficent attitude toward the people to whom they felt called. Most often, however, these people were the objects of mission vision and strategy shaped elsewhere. They often ended up as statistics in reports or nameless faces in pictures that gave evidence the plans designed elsewhere were being fulfilled. Azariah's call, voiced at the beginning of this century, came a little before its time.



Today we are at a most exciting juncture in the history of Christian mission. Two important shifts now make it possible for the church to truly become an instrument of mission as it was intended to be:

1. Awareness of global opportunity and need increases. Soon after the Edinburgh conference, two catastrophic wars tore the world apart. Those wars, however, also brought greater exposure and increased awareness of both global opportunity and need. In response to this new awareness, the post-war years became years of phenomenal expansion of vision and institutions. The church responded enthusiastically to the vision articulated by denominational and para-church agency leaders, and congregations contributed generously through decades of aggressive institution-building and nurturing of mission programs.

The consequences of these developments were both good and sometimes unfortunate. Thousands heard the gospel for the first time. Churches were planted on all six continents, and the horizons of many western Christians were enlarged. The abundance of vision and resources available for the western mission enterprise, however, also made Christians and churches in other places around the world clients rather than friends. Unhealthy relationships were often fostered between the sending and receiving churches, characterized by awkward beneficence on the one hand and ugly dependency on the other.

The consequence for the Western church was no less regrettable than the effects on the receiving churches. Mission came to be owned by institutions, and congregations needed to be courted and cajoled to participate in programs that seemed to belong to agencies.

Change was inevitable. The cataclysmic events of the 1960s that began to reshape society also began to impact the church and its mission. At a missions conference in Bangkok during those years, Emilio Castro said, "We are at the end of a missionary era; we are at the very beginning of world mission." The missionary era Castro believed was ending was mission from the West to the rest.

2. Demographic center of Christianity shifts to the South. Another of the changes of the past quarter century was the shift of the population center of the Christian movement to the South. Many of these churches matured in both their self-identity and vision. These churches in the South have begun to take seriously the call to mission. Former objects of mission have themselves begun to do mission.

The church in the whole world is now an

...us friends.'

instrument of the gospel. At the same time that the church in the South was growing in size and self-identity, congregations in the West were growing more local in their vision and interest. This increased vision and interest in local issues diverted resources away from denominations and their agencies.

These shifts require new relationships with global partners and with local congregations. The changes have brought about a context in which it is now possible, indeed imperative, to engage in mission with friends who are partners in a global mission.

This exciting new phase requires a new understanding of every site as a mission location and every congregation as a potential instrument of mission. Mission agencies must recognize that a new way of "being in mission" is required.

Partnership requires that the mission is not owned by either a Western agency or a nonlocal denominational entity. Each of the partners owns the vision, and each shares what the late David Bosch called "commodities" for mission. Each brings different "gifts" of people, finances, spirituality, networks, trust, experience, and expertise.

Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) recently launched a process of listening and discernment called Cana Venture. In conversations with congregations across North America, we heard a clear interest in direct participation in mission. That participation would work best through partnership in which ownership of mission is shared between the denominational mission agency and the local congregation. Churches in the area of a mission endeavor must also be involved.

Today, Mennonite mission in Mongolia, Dagestan, southern Argentina, and Ecuador is not MBM's mission. It is the mission of partners, both local and global. Local congregations have ownership, and global partners share gifts and "commodities."

The challenge before us is to find a way to answer Azariah's call for mission, which is built on friendship. We must find a way that, out of the common currency of relationships, partnerships can be built and guided by mutuality and global discernment.

Stanley W. Green is president of Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind. He and his wife Ursula are the parents of two sons. The Greens attend Waterford Mennonite Church.

***For the Lord himself . . . will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive . . . will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air.*—1 Thess. 4:16-17**

Gospel Herald

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What mission has done

by Wilbert R. Shenk

Some 150 years of missionary activity has resulted in a greatly changed Mennonite peoplehood. Our efforts have extended God's kingdom around the world.

Conversations about missions in the past have emphasized what the sending church should do on behalf of others. Little attention has been paid to what might happen to us who send as a result of being involved in missionary work.

The Mennonite and Brethren in Christ experience of international missions started almost 150 years ago. This history gives us a basis for assessing what has happened to the sending churches because of missionary work. One way to measure the results of these efforts is by using the method introduced in Acts 2, the number that have been "added to the church."

The Dutch Mennonites pioneered Mennonite involvement in world mission. When the Dutch Mennonite Mission Society sent the first two missionaries to Indonesia in 1851, Mennonite congregations were located in eight nations: Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States. Mennonite and Brethren in Christ membership was entirely of European extraction; it numbered an estimated 120,000 baptized members. Participation in world mission would change this identity dramatically in the course of the next 140 years.

The next convenient benchmark is the year 1911, when a membership survey was made of North American Mennonites. This also marks the end of the first phase of missionary work in Asia and Africa. By adding estimates for Mennonite membership on the other continents, we get a picture of where membership was to be found just before World War I. Mennonite and Brethren in Christ membership on all continents in 1911 was almost 230,000, as summarized in the chart at the bottom of the first column on this page.

By this time, all the larger Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups were engaged in missionary work at home and abroad. Expansion by mission continued over the rest of the 20th century. The number of new foreign missions initiated by European and North American Mennonites and Brethren in Christ for the period 1851-1992 is shown in the chart at the top of the first column on page 7.

The scope of activity on the North American home front was actually proportionately greater than overseas mission prior to 1900, including rural and city missions. Following World War II, the range of activity in Canada and the U.S. expanded rapidly.

What has been the outcome of this concentrated effort? We can make the following observations:

- Mennonites and Brethren in Christ churches are found today in more than 50 countries and number 973,991 baptized members. This compares to eight countries and 120,000 baptized members prior to 1851.
- Between 1978 and 1990, the number of organized conferences increased from 100 to 171.

Little more than 150 years ago, there were 120,000 Mennonites in eight countries. Today 975,000 of us are scattered in 50 different countries all over the world.

Mennonite & Brethren in Christ world membership in 1911

Africa & Asia	3,000
Europe & Russia	150,000
North America	76,746
Total baptized members (est.)	229,746

to the Mennonite church

Mennonite & Brethren in Christ growth of overseas missions

	Number of missions founded
1850-69	1
1870-89	1
1890-99	5
1900-09	7
1910-19	4
1920-29	1
1930-44	6
1945-59	52
1960-69	11
1970-76	13
1977-92	25

• Seventy-eight mother tongues are spoken by Mennonites and Brethren in Christ.

During the past 16 years, since Mennonite World Conference has been compiling statistics, membership has grown from 613,600 to nearly 975,000. The chart at the bottom right of this page shows a continent-by-continent breakdown.

In 1994, world membership consisted of 51.1 percent from European extraction and 48.9 percent of African, Asian, and Latin American ancestry. Africa is the region of most rapid growth at present. Given the present growth rate, by the year 2000 the majority of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ will be outside Europe and North America. It is among the newer churches that the mission dynamic remains strongest.

Zaire now has the largest Mennonite Brethren church of any country, growing nearly 20 percent in 1994 alone. Its membership has increased from 58,000 to 69,400, pushing it ahead of the Indian Mennonite Brethren Church which reports a membership of 65,000. Mennonite Brethren churches in Canada and the United States have a combined baptized membership of 45,000.

Some 150 years of missionary activity has resulted in a greatly changed Mennonite peoplehood. Mennonite mission and service efforts have been used to extend the reign of God around the world. The tangible proof of this are the hundreds of local congregations scattered over the earth—congregations where the God of Jesus Christ is worshiped and obeyed.

Wilbert R. Shenk served with Mennonite Board of Missions from 1965 to 1990. He taught at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., from 1990 to 1995. He is now on the faculty of the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif. He and his wife, Juanita, worship with Pasadena Mennonite Church.

Mennonite & Brethren in Christ membership

	1978	*1984*	*1990*	*1994*
Africa	85,900	107,300	176,500	276,653
Asia	74,300	113,600	147,600	151,057
Latin America	44,300	75,300	83,400	91,436*
Europe	96,100	92,700	68,600	49,132
North America	313,000	340,000	380,500	405,713
Total	613,600	728,900	856,600	973,991

**Includes members of mission-founded congregations (48,768) and of European Mennonite immigrant congregations (42,668). The latter consists of 13,456 members of churches affiliated with Mennonite World Conference plus 29,212 Old Colony Mennonites.*

I have been encouraged by several things which appeared in recent issues of *Gospel Herald*:

• Keith Graber Miller's article, ***Prayer Is Often a Matter of Just Showing Up*** (Oct. 1), including the report from the Princeton Religious Research Center. We need to hear more about these "hidden saints," who I believe are holding our civilization together.

• Paul Lederach for his vision of the church as a group of pilgrims rather than occupants of a fortress, in "My Vision for the Mennonite Church" (Oct. 8).

Chris Wickey
Engadine, Mich.

Solitaire (Oct. 15). Amen! But pray tell me, what kind of room or arrangement you were in so that you could play solitaire on your laptop and not be obvious—or disturb the speaker and those sitting close to you?

Amen again to Ron Helmuth's article, ***What's the Real Issue with TV and Computers?*** (Oct. 15). What an enormous blessing to have e-mail when all my children and some grandchildren are on-line. Like all our gadgets, computers can and should be used for blessing others.

Floyd L. Rheinheimer
Milford, Ind.

MCC Workers Join Christians in West Bank to Pray for Peace (Oct. 15). While I applaud taking a stand for peace, I find some of the statements in this report offensive. And I have many questions.

Those who participated in the march are called Christians. But those who did not side with the Palestinians in this particular incident are referred to as Christian Zionists. If these workers were truly peacemakers, they should refrain from using antagonistic terms for those who have different views.

The end of the report also has this statement: "We hope that what has happened will move Israelis and Palestinians in the direction of peace based on justice." I consistently have nagging questions whenever peace and justice are combined in one statement. I understand peace to be people with divergent views living and working together. However, justice implies someone has the rules and sits in judgment over another. It means someone is wrong, and there must be a punishment.

The implication here is that the Jews were wrong and forcibly took the land from the Palestinians. Then the question becomes: how far back do we go to find out who has the "right" to the land? It is not a case of who did what to whom. "Right" could be taken back through centuries, with both sides showing many justifications for their view.

If this is what must be done in Israel, then where is our support for the Native Americans here in the U.S.? Shouldn't we be just as strongly focused on giving all of our country back to them?

As long as peacemakers are biased in favor of one group over another and expect justice to occur, they are not peacemakers. Peacemakers must also be reconcilers.

Stephen J. Schertz
Lombard, Ill.

I find hope when I read statements such as this one from John Drescher in "My Vision for the Mennonite Church" (Oct. 15): "Only with a spiritual awakening will we pray as we ought, will we worship in Spirit and in truth, will we give freely and joyfully of our material possessions, will our marriages and families be saved, and will we serve and witness with power every place we move.

"Such an awakening will begin, as awakenings always do, in a movement of prayer. Everywhere I've gone, I have found a nucleus, a faithful remnant, longing and praying for such an awakening. Surely God will answer these servants who cry night and day."

God is doing "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work with us." God is giving his vision to many. He will continue to build his church and extend his kingdom as we humble ourselves, pray, seek his face, and turn from sin. My question is: am I willing to pay the price?

David Eshleman
Laurel, Md.

The article, ***From Flaccid Whiners to Authentic Witnesses***, and the editorial, ***So Who Wants to Be a Martyr*** (Oct. 22), both highlight an issue that has been bothering me. I do not know if it is a result of my moving from Canada to the U.S., going from GC into MC circles, or some other change. But I've recently found myself surrounded by a much greater intrigue in martyrdom than I am accustomed to and comfortable with.

I am familiar with *Martyrs Mirror*, which seems to be the third testament for so many. I notice in others a sense of vicarious pride that the characters within its pages are their ancestors and that martyr blood has been passed on to them.

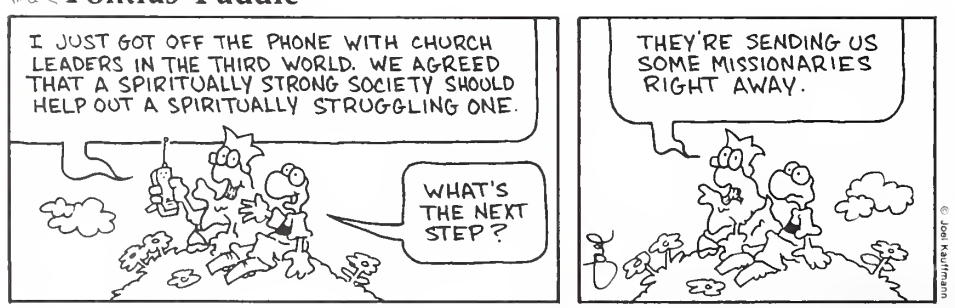
Like the heroes of war, our martyred ancestors have become idols. They divide our history and our world into easy categories of "us" and "them."

Calling Mennonites to use martyrdom as a model for witnessing is calling us to demonize the rest of the world—those who would make us martyrs. Do we want the world to do what we think is wrong, i.e., kill people, so that we can feel a greater sense of pride about our own piety?

Ours should be a faith that takes risks, which may lead to our death. However, an ideology of martyrdom requires an evil villain to martyr us. It seems contradictory to me to be a people who calls for justice and yet maintains an ideology which is satisfied by injustice.

Kevin S. Driedger
Goshen, Ind.

Pontius' Puddle



AMBS • Window

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Focus

Learning the character of the church

Mary H. Schertz

I flew into the Saskatoon airport at dusk on a Sunday evening. I had left the sultry humidity of Elkhart behind for the slightly less humid air of the prairie provinces. I was there to teach Matthew 18-25 to some of the pastors and lay leaders of Saskatchewan. The gospel texts for the fall lections were to be taken from that section of Matthew and I had been asked to teach a one week class on these texts.

It had been a long day and my mind was more on getting to my destination (i.e. bed) than on the gospel of Matthew that Sunday evening. But as I stepped off the plane and was greeted by Elsie and Delmer Epp, two realities of Canadian life became immediately apparent. First, Canadian hospitality is real and warm. Second, the sunsets are absolutely spectacular. For the rest of the week I tried to take in as much of both as possible.

I soon settled into a rhythm. In the mornings at breakfast I often shared the summer-deserted dining hall with Henry, who had been with the host college for many years and was working on renovations in the dining room. I learned a lot from and about Henry.

Then I would collect my books and head for the morning class sessions. There were two—with a break around the bottomless coffee pot between them. Afternoons were filled with class preparation and lots of good, long walks around Saskatoon. Several afternoons I walked to the edge of town and out onto the prairie; other afternoons I headed for the shops and other charms of downtown Saskatoon. Of course, I also enjoyed eating lunch with members of the class and the evening invitations to homes. A special event of the week was seeing a performance of *The Miracle Worker* directed by Vickie Dyck and performed at her barn theatre outside Saskatoon.

J. Tyler Klassen

So by now what you are thinking is that a seminary teacher leaves the familiar classrooms of AMBS and heads off for exotic destinations in order to have a good time. Well, that's certainly part of it. But there is a more serious side to it as well. There is, I have found, no way to really gain insight into what pastors, lay leaders and members of congregations are thinking, saying and asking unless a professor visits people in their own setting and takes part, however briefly, in life as they experience it. The classroom discussions off-campus are different than those on campus. Conference and regional issues come to the fore.

One gains a sense of the flavor of a particular setting as the pastors and other leaders share stories about their congregations and the joy and struggle of serving them. One learns that the issues of the church in Canada are sometimes the same but many times different from the issues of the church in the U.S. But most important, one learns that the church across the world is not an abstraction. Each arena of the church's work and mission in the world has its own faces, names, personalities, scenery and character.

Now, when people mention Saskatoon, or Saskatchewan, or the prairie provinces or the church in Canada—while my knowledge is not great, I nevertheless carry in my mind and heart images of the spirit of those places and those peoples. And that is the legacy of my week in Saskatoon.

Mary H. Schertz is associate professor of New Testament at AMBS.

Inside

Bringing seminary resources to conferences and congregations

What happens when seminary education comes to us

On the road with AMBS faculty

Bringing seminary resources to conferences and congregations

"Multiplying resources" is the way Ralph Lebold describes the efforts of conferences and seminaries working together at pastoral ministry training.

It is difficult for many pastors and lay leaders to come to the academic centers where ministry training is available. "It's a big area," Ralph says, referring to Canada and the U.S. So he, as director of external programs at AMBS, works to make the seminary more available to people throughout the church.

Each of the programs with which Ralph works fills a need in pastoral training. Each builds on the cooperation of conferences and Mennonite seminaries to make pastoral training and theological education accessible not just in Harrisonburg, Va.; Elkhart, Ind., and Winnipeg Man., but across North America.

CBTE

In the **Conference-based Theological Education** program, five centers and seven other programs in Canada and the U.S. offer graduate-level theological education and biblical studies. These are programs organized and planned by conferences with the assistance of the seminaries.

PSDE

Pastoral Studies Distance Education is also designed to make ministry training available to people who cannot leave their work to study at a seminary.

This program is particularly helpful when people are called out of their congregations to be pastors without formal preparation for that role. Deacons and other lay leaders are also participating in the program.

Currently PSDE offers a college-level course called "Leading God's People." It involves individual study and reflection like a correspondence course; however, it also includes involvement with the instructor for each unit and with a mentor in the student's geographical area.

Graduate-level courses for PSDE are being developed. These will add the ingredient of communication via computer to increase the interaction among students and between student and instructor.

Urban Leaders Development

The Urban Leaders Development Program is a new effort underway in Chicago. To help meet the leadership training needs of urban Chicago pastors, Ralph is helping to coordinate resources already available in the area. As a shared effort among AMBS, Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Board of Education, this program can become a model for leadership development in other urban areas.

New ventures

Providing seminary resources for people whose first language is not English is an emerging need. Because of Ralph's work in helping bring pastoral training to many across North America, he has had contacts from groups such as Laotians, Hmong and Chinese. "We need to make a conscious effort to help these groups train their leaders," Ralph says.

With 20 years of experience in coordinating these varied programs which combine conference, congregation and seminary resources, Ralph concludes, "If you're going to be faithful to what the church is about, you try to make something happen."

On the road with AMBS faculty

Faculty members travel the continent, teaching and preaching. . .some even travel the globe. Here's a sampling from the 1995-96 school year.

Jacob Elias: Bible teaching and preaching in Reedley, Calif.; preached at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.; led prayer week services in Leamington, Ont.

Gayle Gerber Koontz: resource person for the Western District women's retreat; preached at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Ted Koontz: gave keynote address at conference on church related institutions held at Elizabethtown College

Marlene Kropf: spoke at Conference of Mennonites in Canada sessions in Calgary, Alb.; presented weekend services at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake, Minn.; gave keynote address at Worship Symposium at Bethel College, N. Newton, Kan.

Ben Ollenburger: taught Isaiah four Sundays at the Howard-Miami Mennonite Church near Kokomo, Ind.; preached in Souderton, Pa. Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, and Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

(Continued on column four of next page)

When Rev. Woodie White, president of the international United Methodist Council of Bishops, visited AMBS in September, he stood on "common ground."

In his chapel message, he said, "Every now and then we must step back from our particularities—political opinion, social standing, race, gender, theological perspective—and see that common ground which binds us together. We who are Christians claim that unique common ground, the One we call Lord and Master."

United Methodist students make up roughly thirteen percent of the seminary student body; some commute more than 100 miles to attend once-a-week classes. AMBS is approved by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church as a seminary for United Methodist pastoral training.

In addition to speaking in chapel, Bishop White met with Methodist students like Jo An Schaetzle (center), and with faculty members, including Mary K. Oyer (left). Photo by Gordon Janzen

Three participants speak:

What happens when seminary education comes to us

I found the first unit of the Pastoral Studies Distance Education course to be of considerable value personally, and also in my role as halftime pastor. Answering the questions resulted in new insight and healing, and I felt guided through scripture and by the Holy Spirit in personal decisions I needed to make.

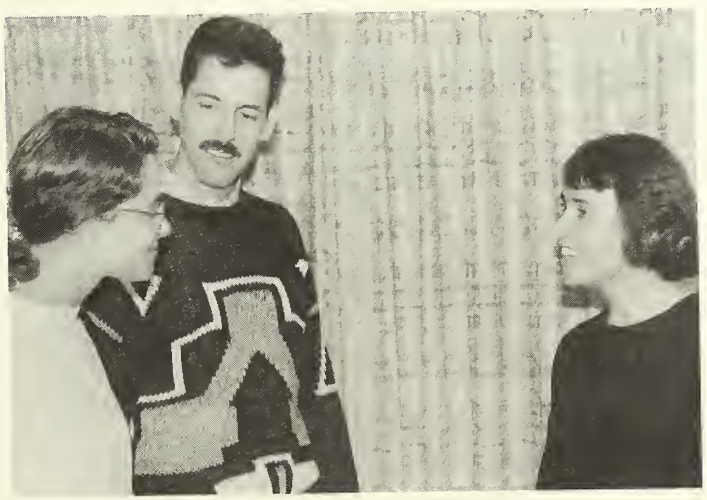
Dialogue with a congregational response group and discussion with my mentor helped me determine priorities in ministerial tasks and also helped me develop a vision for the small rural congregation which I serve.

In a nutshell, I gained an understanding of myself as a child of God, and also clarity as to the role of leadership in the church as it applies in my situation.

Eileen Wiebe
Pastor, Superb Mennonite Church, Kerrobert, Saskatchewan

A number of pastors in our area have not completed seminary or are relatively new to the Mennonite church. The workshops and classes offered by our Theological Education Committee allow pastors to supplement training and education through events that are more accessible than those on the campus of an Anabaptist/Mennonite institution. Schools in our region offer courses but we also want our pastors to have training opportunities in the context of our unique tradition. Our events provide continuing education close to home that is rooted in the Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage.

Teresa Moser McDermid
Pastor, Sunrise Mennonite Church, Clackamas, Oregon
Chairperson, Theological Education Committee, Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (a CBTE program)



"Not all seminary education happens on campus," Erick Sawatzky said at a recent AMBS forum. "Not all of what is needed in preparation for ministry takes place in the library and classrooms."

As director of field services, he was introducing three students who spent their summer doing internships: Tonya Ramer, chaplain intern in Ft. Wayne, Ind.; Gordon Janzen, chaplain intern in South Bend, Ind., and Maribeth Longacre, pastoral intern in Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church. *Photo by Mary E. Klassen*

With more than 20 children under age six living on the campus, and a similar number enrolled in the AMBS Cooperative Childcare program, the children's chapel service on Sept. 13 involved a host of lively participants listening to a story read by AMBS student Brian Burkholder.
Photo by Mary E. Klassen

Great Plains Seminary Education Program offers graduate level studies to 70 congregations in a thirty-mile radius of Newton, Kan. Classes one night a week make it possible for many people to take a course each semester fully certified at AMBS.

Great Plains appeals to a wide range of people interested in personal growth and intellectual challenge. For many, this leads to study and a degree at AMBS. Several pastors now serving in this area began study with the Great Plains program.

Our Semester in Kansas program brings a teacher or church leader to the seven-state area comprised by the South Central Conference and Western District Conference. The person teaches a course and preaches or teaches in churches and also leads weekend and midweek teaching sessions. Mary Oyer from AMBS and David Schroeder from Winnipeg, Man., have ministered effectively through this program.

Jacob Friesen, director of Great Plains Seminary Education Program (A CBTE center)

On the road

(Continued from page 2)

Mary Oyer: *on leave in Japan, Taiwan and Japan fall semester 1995. Active in the U.S. and Canada introducing hymns and speaking about African music.*

Walter Sawatsky: *presented several lectures at the Appeal of Conscience Foundation's annual seminar on religion for the U.S. State Department foreign service workers.*

Erick Sawatzky: *preached in Kansas and Indiana.*

Mary Schertz: *preached ten times including an ordination; led Bible study for Women's group; taught at Goshen Bible Institute; taught in Saskatoon, Sask.*

Daniel Schipani: *taught in Texas, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay, and Argentina; participated in Menno Simons Symposium in the Netherlands.*

Marcus Smucker: *led a spirituality retreat; consultant and retreat leader for Eastern Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Central Committee in Central America.*

Willard Swartley: *preached/taught at Prairie Street, Lombard (Ill.), Cedar Falls (Iowa), East Goshen and Maple City Chapel (Goshen, Ind.) Mennonite Churches; Bible teacher for Commission on Overseas Mission/Mennonite Board of Missions seminar-retreat.*

June Alliman Yoder: *made 32 presentations: Kansas, Iowa, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Virginia, Manitoba.*

Perry Yoder: *led a Pastors' Week workshop on the use of the computer in Bible Study; taught Job at the Goshen (Ind.) Bible Institute.*

President's Window

In Mark 8 there is the story of Jesus healing a blind man in a rather odd way. He touches his eyes once and the blind man sees, but not clearly. He sees people like trees walking. Then after Jesus' second touch he sees all things clearly.

Theological education in the Mennonite church is a bit like this. It needs two touches to be 20/20. Some students do most of their preparation for pastoral leadership on campus. They enjoy the rich delights of faculty and campus life, but they don't see clearly until they have also done supervised field education in the congregation, off-campus.

Some students begin their work "out there," in Conference-based Theological Education courses or Pastoral Studies Distance Education. They are already at work in the church and pastoral training happens in an action-reflection mode. These students also need the strengths that a campus-based program offers: faculty, library resources, time for in-depth study, multicultural classroom experiences.

Last May the AMBS board and faculty met to discuss what we called "non-traditional" theological education. Many of the programs we talked about are described in this issue of *AMBS Window*. Through Ralph Lebold's excellent efforts we can say that now more than seventy percent of Mennonites in North America have access to theological education within commuting distance.

Both Eastern Mennonite Seminary and AMBS are offering courses by electronic mail this year. This, with other "seminary without walls" opportunities, makes pastoral training for ministerial leadership more accessible than ever before.

It's important to note also the short-term study options during the summer and interterm at AMBS. Next summer the second annual Evangelism and Mission Institute will meet in Winnipeg, Man., for two sessions, then at AMBS for a third session.

With this varied menu for theological education available, it becomes harder to excuse oneself for not preparing to see clearly in the gift and task of ministerial leadership. And what is the goal? To "understand God more truly"and lead God's people in knowledge and love, to be and do the mission of the kingdom of God for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Willard M. Swartley, Acting President

Spring weekend intensive course:

Systematic Theology in Believers Church Perspective

Instructor: Tom Finger, Ph.D.
Professor of Systematic and Spiritual Theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary

Meets four weekends during spring semester:
Feb. 21-22, March 21-22, April 18-19, May 9-10

For information, call the AMBS registrar.

AMBS Panorama

Course offered by e-mail

AMBS is offering the course, Eastern Christianity, by e-mail during second semester, as an experiment to test this method of instruction. The course will be offered simultaneously on campus and to e-mail registrants, with the hope that a small cluster of students from around the world will contribute to the discussion in the on-campus course as well as among themselves.

Walter Sawatsky, AMBS associate professor of church history and mission and director of the Mission Training Center, is the instructor.

For information about registering for the course, consult the AMBS web site: http://members. aol.com/MennoSem/home.htm, or the registrar.

Summer School

During the months of June and August, AMBS will offer thirteen summer school courses, including courses on Corinthians, Ezekiel, Spirituality and pastoral counseling, history of Christian spirituality, ethics for church institutions, congregational administration, practices of faith and science. Instructors include Millard Link, Peter Erb, John Paul Lederach, Del Glick, and Juan and Moira Rogers in addition to AMBS faculty. For more information, contact the AMBS registrar.

Summer Evangelism and Mission Institute

In summer 1997, the second annual Evangelism and Mission Institute will meet first on the campus of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man., for two sessions, July 8-25; then on the AMBS campus for a third session, August 4-15.

Courses offered will include biblical foundations of mission, gospel and western culture, evangelism and early Christianity, new religious movements, evangelism vision and planning for the local congregation. For more information, contact the AMBS registrar.

Advent resources on the web site

AMBS Bible faculty have provided commentaries on the advent lectionary readings. These may be helpful to pastors and worship leaders in planning advent worship services. Find the resources at the AMBS web site: http://members. aol.com/MennoSem/home.htm.

The purpose of AMBS Window is to invite Mennonite churches to further the work of God's kingdom by calling people to leadership ministries and helping to support their training for ministry.

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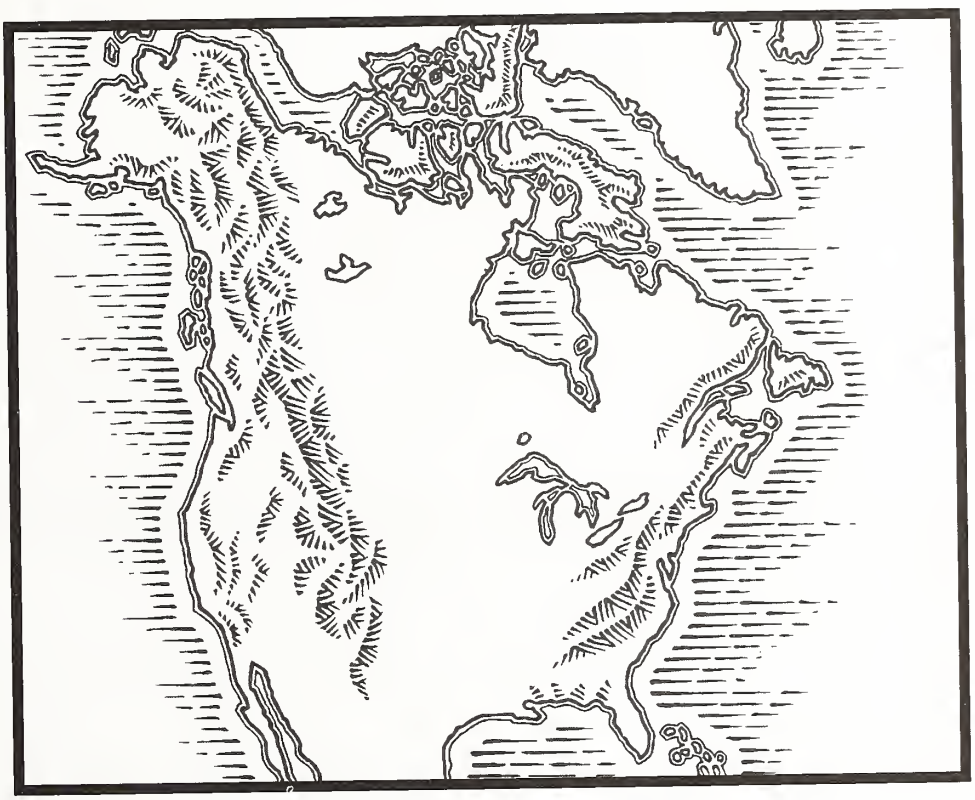
'Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history'

(continued from page 3)

southern churches are required to comply with certain rules and procedures that are familiar to the Northern churches. New mission—especially that which has no clear techniques, procedures, and strategies or doesn't fit into the northern techniques and procedures—seems unaccepted. There is no place for spiritual and mystical experiment whatsoever. All mission and partnership must be stated, defined, and formulated clearly in reasonable and logical terms.

This language of operationalism shakes the very system of my culture. It is a culture in which the mystery of life is a more energizing force in mission than the predictability of life, in which personal relationships through physical contacts are more appreciated than impersonal relationships through electrical wires, in which storytelling about real people is more meaningful than using statistics to tell about numbers, in which experience of concrete realities based on trial and error is valued over a written proposal of predictions.



The third language that hurts us is the language of ***egalitarianism.*** In this language of "do the same thing as equals," equality becomes the dominant tone and independence the most glorious virtue. Global partnership in mission, for instance, seems to be understood as an effort to establish partnership between equals in which each is expected to do the same thing of the same value independently. This view implies that unless this condition is achieved the southern churches will never be considered equals in partnership.

The idea of giving and receiving doesn't work within this framework. Southern spirituality or wisdom in exchange for northern money, for instance, is not considered as the same value given by equal partners. In the language of egalitarianism, when southern churches still need northern money to be able to share their spirituality or wisdom, it shows that they are not independent or equal partners yet. "Money for money" is the apparent slogan.

Giving the same gift of the same value independently seems to be the only way for the southern churches to prove themselves as equals in the egalitarian view. When the Japanese Mennonite churches gave $10,000 (U.S.) to the North American churches, it was front page news in most of the North American Mennonite publications. That action seemed to be very important for the North American churches and was understood as an evidence of the equality of the Japanese Mennonite churches in global partnership.

This is not a southern understanding of the essence of the partnership. In many cultures in the South, the most important element in relationships is not equality but properness; the main virtue not independence but interdependence.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to establish a global partnership in the egalitarian view—that is, to expect the southern churches to behave as equals and independent partners, in the sense of functioning the same way as the northern churches do with the same resources the northern churches have. Reality shows that by birth, by experience, and by economic and political power, the northern churches have many more resources than the southern church-

(continued on page 10)

Global partnership between Northern and Southern churches is better perceived as one between those who have equal dignities but unequal functions.

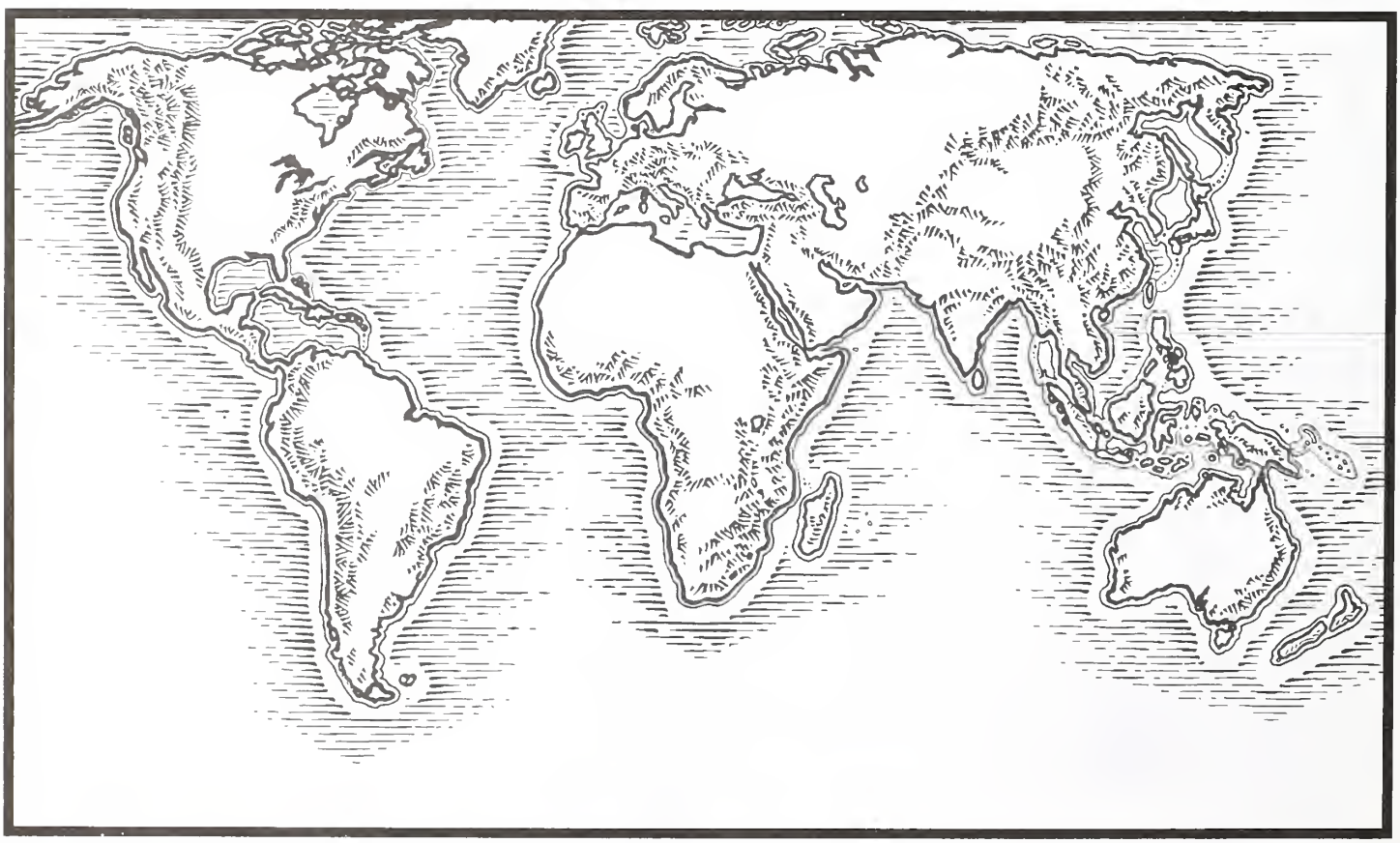
es do. The only equality that we can apply here is the equality of dignity—that those from the South whose names are Widjaja, Kunjam, or Gonzalia have the same dignity as Mennonites as those from the North whose names are Shenk, Yoder, or Miller.

It is very possible, however, to expect the southern churches to be accountable and responsible to do their proper function. This means that global partnership between the northern and southern churches is better perceived as partnership between partners who have equal dignities yet unequal functions. Thus we must determine what the proper function of each will be.

When Alice kept talking about cats and dogs, the mouse said, "Let us go to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history, and you'll understand why it is I hate cats and dogs." This proposal of a moratorium contains a profound insight. The mouse had come to see that Alice was too preoccupied with herself and that they had to get to the shore before they could talk. There and only there, the mouse could begin to tell its history; there and only there, it could make Alice understand what it meant to be a mouse.

Here I am, the little mouse, proposing a moratorium (to include a moratorium of all northern money if necessary, when money has become a curse upon churches rather than a blessing) and a time to tell our history. As a little mouse, I do not have any power whatsoever to demand that you listen to our history. But if you are willing to listen to us, you will discover that we have something worthwhile to be discussed. On the contrary, if you keep insisting on using your language and are not willing to listen to our history, we had better close the book because your language will only hurt our feelings and diminish our dignity.

Paulus Widjaja is an ordained pastor from the Muria Christian Church of Indonesia, one of three Mennonite groups in that country. He is currently studying at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, in Elkhart, Ind. This article is adapted from a presentation at a "Partnership in Mission and Evangelism: Preparing for the 21st Century" conference held at AMBS this past July.



Mennonite Board of Missions talks about integration options

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—A study document about integrating mission programs was the centerpiece of discussions at the Oct. 17-19 meeting of the board of directors of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

"Integration of MC/GC Mennonite Mission" is a document drafted by a mission integration task force made up of representatives from General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC).

"We did not want to come out of the mission task force meeting with a proposal for endorsement but a study document that people can reflect on and offer counsel and feedback," MBM president Stanley W. Green told MBM board members in their October meeting. "The challenge is to expand ownership of mission vision and interest among baby boomers and post-baby boomers."

In meetings here, in Newton, Kan., in Winnipeg, Man., in Salunga, Pa., and elsewhere, leaders of Mennonite mission organizations are responding to the study document.

"Our ideal would be a mission structure where a mission vision in every congregation could be carried out in a variety of partnerships facilitated by mission boards," read minutes from a task force meeting.

One model discussed in the study document outlines two mission boards, one in Canada and one in the United States. These boards would administer mission programs through "regional mission centers" in Winnipeg, Newton, and Elkhart. Other centers could be added at a later date.

"Programs administered through a given regional mission center will serve the entire mission program," the document said. "The regional mission centers would be linked together so that someone could contact any regional mission center and be connected with a program or resource administered from any of the regional mission centers."

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Task force participants also examined a more decentralized model that proposed one North American Mission Council which would serve as a forum for four regional "mission resource centers" with independent boards.

Most participants leaned toward one North American entity, which could meet in national subgroups as needed. The GC Commission on Home Ministries (CHM) staff, responding to the study document, recommended a "binational mission board rather than a consultative group."

In general, there was strong support for the values of simplicity, "seamless" accessibility, and working with "centers of vitality" in the denominations.

"Every regional center does not have to do things the same way," said Lois Barrett, CHM executive secretary. "There would be some opportunity for differences between mission centers. At the same time, we wish there would be something at the center to tie these regional mission centers together."

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Although mission resource centers may provide "seamless" accessibility, they may not offer the same experience. "We are fooling ourselves if we think we are going to make this amalgamation with all these centers that will look like McDonald's [franchises]," said Sally Schreiner, vice chair of the MBM board. "They have different philosophies. These centers are different. [But] people will feel more ownership if they can relate to a contextualized regional center."

The task force hopes to plan implementation of a new mission structure in March 1997. Delegates to each denomination's assembly would approve any plan in principle that summer. Structural integration could occur as early as 1998.—*Tom Price*

Nearing the $200,000 mark: Funds for churches in Ethiopia continue to grow

Salunga, Pa. (EMM)—Some $171,000 of the $200,000 needed for an Ethiopia church building project of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) has been contributed, according to Harold Reed, former EMM Africa director. Most of that amount, $123,000, has been given in 1996.

The church in Ethiopia continues to grow at a phenomenal rate. During the past year, membership has increased from 83,378 members in August 1995 to more than 104,000 members today.

In late 1994, EMM entered into agreement with Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) in Ethiopia for above-budget funding toward the need for church buildings. Most of the previous church properties had been taken over by the Marxist government in 1982 when the government banned the church, imprisoned key leaders, and forced the church underground.

'The persecution didn't scatter people; it brought people together.'
—Nathan Hege

Despite ten years of persecution, the underground MKC church grew from 5,000 members to 34,000. Since 1992, some of the properties have been returned, but they are very small in relation to the size of congregations that have developed in those areas.

When the church in Dire Dawa was forced underground, about 120 people worshiped in a building which seated 200 people. More than 2,500 people were part of the Dire Dawa church when it reemerged in the early 1990s, according to Kefyalew Cherinet, the lead evangelist at Dire Dawa. Cherinet told Nathan Hege, former EMM worker who is writing a book on Meserete Kristos Church history, "It [the persecution] didn't scatter people; it brought people together."

In 1990, EMM had adopted a similar target of raising $200,000, with the understanding that MKC would match those funds. Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Board of Missions also encouraged Mennonite churches throughout North America to contribute to the project. That goal was realized four years later.

Although the agreed-upon terms were a matching basis, MKC promptly moved to a 50-50 basis only for those congregations in poorer, outlying communities. MKC encourages each church to participate in the matching plan according to its size and level of financial resources. Congregations and larger church communities with more financial resources were required to contribute more than 50 percent, in many cases up to 80 percent, with 20 percent coming from the contributions from North Americans.

—*Carol L. Wert*

Atlantic Coast considers 'illuminating fire' of God

Leola, Pa.—Worship rather than business characterized the Atlantic Coast Conference annual assembly and missions festival, held Oct. 25-27 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church.

Atlantic Coast delegates, who complete most conference business in other settings, spent much of the meeting in workshops and worship times on the theme "Touched by Fire."

Owen Burkholder, moderator of the Mennonite Church and Virginia Conference minister, spoke on Saturday morning and evening on Isaiah 6. Just as God called Isaiah to be a messenger "until cities lie waste without inhabitant," Burkholder challenged the audience to "understand . . . God will enable you to be faithful over the long haul."

'Doesn't mean becoming static.' The conference began with men's and women's dinner meetings on Friday evening and ended with a youth rally on Sunday night. Moderator Robert Petersheim spoke on Saturday afternoon on the *Vision: Healing and Hope* statement, adapting it for Atlantic Coast congregations. "This business of being the people of God does not mean becoming static," Petersheim said. "It means going somewhere." He called delegates and others to not "park ourselves with the people of God."

Delegates heard staff and commission reports on Saturday morning, along with a report from Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. The conference peace and service commission awarded a "Keeping the Faith, Sharing the Peace" mug to Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster for the congregation's involvement in numerous peacemaking projects in the city. The evangelism commission awarded a $5,000 Ivan H. and Mary Alice Stoltzfus Evangelism Grant to Immanuel Community Church, Flushing, N.Y. A new church was also received into conference—Hope Community Church of Fleetwood, Pa.

Other business. Delegates received an update from a task force working on a proposal for funding a half-time conference minister. The executive committee will bring a recommendation to the delegates in their January meeting.

A first draft of Atlantic Coast Conference 1997 goals and objectives was also introduced. More discussion will occur in January.—*Valerie Weaver*

Card by card by card. *Jakarta, Indonesia (MCC)*—Ibu Neneng (left) and Ibu Ani (holding a card) are two of the 24 women here who earn income through making cards. Through Maranatha Cards, they make 150,000 cards a year, 60,000 of them Christmas cards. Ten Thousand Villages, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) job creation program, is the biggest buyer of Maranatha Cards. Shown here with their children, the women glue precut paper designs to batik fabric. During the rainy season, the women's one-room houses stand in knee-high floodwater. They hope to move to better housing as they earn and save income from cardmaking.

Maranatha Cards was started in 1986 by foreign women in Jakarta who were moved by the poverty they saw. Several years ago an Indonesian woman, Connie Pelmelay, was appointed manager. She has instituted new policies, such as asking women to pay for their own raw materials to teach about capital and profit making. Although these "tough love" measures have not always made Pelmelay popular, the results are beginning to show. Some women have used what they have learned to develop their own businesses, such as buying produce at the wholesale market to sell at neighborhood kiosks.

GCs discuss integration and communications

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The financial picture at Faith & Life Press "is serious but not without hope," according to a new business plan for Faith & Life Press (FLP), the publisher of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

The business plan was approved in principle by the Commission on Education (COE) at an Oct. 3-6 meeting in Berne, Ind. Among the changes proposed in the new plan is a growth in sales from $946,224 in 1995 to $1.34 million in 2001.

Everett Thomas, executive secretary of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, spoke to the group about the integration of the Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GC). He noted that GCs and MCs have different structures for Christian education, which will make it difficult to integrate in this area until the grand design of the integrated denomination is known.

Communications in an integrated church was the key topic at Oct. 18-19 meetings of the Division on General Services (DGS). GC communications director David Linscheid spoke about identity formation and communications structure in a new denomination. He highlighted three goals for denominational communication: promotion and identity, marketing and response, and internal communication.

In addition, DGS passed a resolution asking the GC General Board to recommend that the Integration Committee and others involved in integration consider denominational identity formation and communications at each point in discussions, beginning with a decision about the name of the denomination.

MCC Atlanta unit closes:

Gathering around a table of shared memories

Atlanta, Ga. (MCC)—The most precious piece of furniture in Atlanta's "Mennonite House" was a large round table, recalled Vincent Harding at a celebration of 35 years of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) service in Atlanta, held from Sept. 20 to 22. That table, capable of seating 24 people, symbolized the community spirit and desire for interracial dialogue that motivated Mennonite volunteers and their co-workers throughout the unit's history. Weekend events also commemorated MCC's decision to close the Atlanta unit in order to open a new Voluntary Service house in Philadelphia. The new unit will involve members from MCC's traditional sending constituency and from the local community.

'The experience of the 1960s is an important story. What this has meant for the Mennonite church is not fully appreciated.'
—Vincent Harding

Rosemarie and Vincent Harding, the first leaders of MCC's Atlanta service program, spoke to the Atlanta gathering on the theme, "Treasure Old and Treasure New: Justice in the Household of Faith." Taken from Jesus' words in Matthew 13:52, the theme called for remembering the experience of the past in order to renew a vision for racial justice in the United States.

"The experience of the 1960s is an important story," Vincent said. "What this has meant for the Mennonite church is not fully appreciated."

Former volunteers and supporters of the Atlanta unit gathered around the "table" of shared memories at the gathering. It began with a trip to the South by five Mennonites from Woodlawn Mennonite Church in Chicago in 1958. This interracial group wanted to look for ways Mennonites could be involved in the civil rights "freedom movement" led by African-Americans.

A significant decision in a time of segregation, the trip started in Little Rock, Ark., and led the group through Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. This group's meetings with civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., and others planted the seed of the idea for an Atlanta unit.

In 1961 MCC's Peace Section and Voluntary Service office sent Rosemarie and Vincent Harding to Atlanta to "represent an Anabaptist peace witness" here. The Hardings first moved into 540 Houston Street, around the corner from the home of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Coretta Scott King. The "Mennonite House," as it became known, sought to witness to the local community about the possibilities of Christian-based justice and racial reconciliation, symbolized by interracial living.

It was also a resting place for people who had been wounded, physically and emotionally, in the civil rights struggle. The house provided a location for a network of volunteers to work in the South as part of the freedom struggle.

Mennonite volunteers in Atlanta have worked with numerous community-building efforts.—*Deborah Fast*

Atlanta's "Mennonite House" in 1996. For 35 years, Mennonite Central Committee volunteers here have sought to witness to the local community about Christian-based justice and racial reconciliation.

Croatian and Serbian translations of a well-known Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) poster were floating around the First Balkan Evangelical Conference held in Belgrade in September. The poster's text, written by former MCC administrator John Stoner, reads: "A modest proposal for peace. Let the Christians of the world agree not to kill one another." At the suggestion of Croatian and Serbian evangelicals, the translation omitted the final two words so that people don't interpret the poster as allowing Christians to justify the killing of non-Christians.

Each of the 1,500 delegates received a postcard version of the poster. According to MCC worker Harold Otto, the conference was the largest ever initiated and organized by Balkan evangelicals themselves.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

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Cold cans of soda took the place of tracts at a Fourth of July fireworks display in Bryan, Ohio. Members of Pine Grove Mennonite Church in Stryker, Ohio, teamed up to canvas the crowd and hand out free cans of pop to people. Along with each can, the teams handed out a card which said, "To express God's love for you. Enjoy!"

The idea began at a workshop on evangelism that was sponsored by the Ohio Conference Evangelism Commission in Ashland this spring. After discussing the idea at small group potlucks, the members of Pine Grove decided to take an offering and then bought 600 cans of pop, which they iced down in big barrels on the backs of two pickup trucks and took to the fireworks display.—*Ohio Evangel*

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Concern over schools violating civil rights laws was how Rachel Yoder began her "revolutionary" work, according to an editorial in the Fort Wayne (Ind.) *Journal Gazette*. Yoder, a 1972 graduate of Eastern Mennonite University, recently received EMU's "Alumna of the Year" award for her persistent efforts to help integrate and upgrade public schools in Fort Wayne. In 1985, Yoder got involved with a local parent's group who filed a class action law suit because Fort Wayne City Schools were out of compliance with federal and state civil rights laws. In 1989 and 1994, the city and the state, respectively, settled out of court with payments of more than $12.9 million to be used for integrating the schools.

Yoder also proposed and helped implement two reading programs and a conflict management program in the schools. In 1995, Yoder was named a Petra Fellow, a national award given to four citizens annually for "unsung activism for human freedom."—*Eastern Mennonite University*

• **Peace proposals sought.** Faculty members of Mennonite-related colleges are being urged to submit proposals for the 1997-1998 C. Henry Smith Peace Lecture. Proposals may be in the form of drama, stories, and art as well as oral. The winner will lecture at Goshen (Ind.) and Bluffton (Ohio) colleges during the 1997-98 school year. A stipend and travel allowance are part of the award. Applications are available from John Nyce, interim academic dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

• **New appointments:**

Karl Koop, assistant professor of theology and Anabaptist-Mennonite studies, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

John Paul Lederach, adjunct professor in conflict transformation, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He continues as professor of sociology and conflict studies at Eastern Mennonite University.

• **Pastor transitions:**

Sam Sollenberger was installed as pastor at Rock Hill Mennonite Church, McConnellsburg, Pa., on Oct. 27.

• **Missionary transitions:**

Arnold and Carol Miller began a one-year assignment with Mennonite Board of Missions overseas missions associates at Nazareth Hospital in August.

Cindy Groff left for Guatemala on Oct. 24 with Eastern Mennonite Missions for a one-year intern-in-missions assignment.

Glenn and June Kauffman with daughter Lia returned to Hong Kong on Oct. 22 after a four-month home leave. They began a three-year term with EMM.

Paul and June Kropf returned to Albania on Oct. 8 after a three-month home leave. They began a three-year term with EMM.

Elva Landis returned to the United States on Sept. 5 after serving more than 47 years in Tanzania with EMM. Her address is c/o Landis Homes, 1001 East Oregon Rd., Lititz, PA 17543.

Elaine Shank left for Cambodia on Oct. 4 with EMM for a one-year teaching assignment.

• **New resources:**

Directory of CPS includes names and addresses of over 12,000 participants in the Civilian Public Service between 1941 and 1947. This 1996 edition is a revised version of a 1947 directory. Available from the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors, 202 483-2220.

• **Job openings:**

Academic dean, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include administering outcomes assessment and faculty development programs, guiding a review of general education, supervising the libraries, overseeing the department chairs, faculty evaluating, and advising the provost with respect to academic budget. Position begins July 1, 1997; application deadline is Dec. 31. Send inquiries and applications to Shirley H. Showalter, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

Executive director, Waterloo Centre of Shalom Counselling Services, Kitchener, Ont. Responsibilities include supervison of staff, financial management, and maintenance of professional standards. Half-time position begins April 16, 1997. Send résumé by Nov. 30 to Timothy W. Thiessen, Search Committee, 187 Wentworth Ave., Kitchener, ON N2M 3S3.

• **Change of address:**

Edward T. and Deborah Robbins, from Watertown, NY 13601 to 1408 N. Wabash Ave., Kokomo, IN 46901.

NEW MEMBERS

East Union, Kalona, Ia.: Beth Hershberger, Emily Miller.

Homestead, Fla.: R. J. Cutrer, Rose Cutrer, José Hernandez, Rinna Hernandez, Ernie Pries, Mary Pries, and Ruth Daniel.

Leetonia, Ohio: Aaron Esbenshade, Eric Brinker, Jenny Horst, Aaron Wining, and Jim Wining.

Pine Grove, Battle Creek, Mich.: Bill Nixon and Eleanor Nixon.

Zion, Archbold, Ohio: Becky Rufenacht, Evon Rufenacht, and Kenneth Rufenacht.

BIRTHS

Beck, Mary Beth Alderfer and Kerry, White River Junction, Vt., Mara Alderfer (first child), Sept. 12.

Burkhart, Gina Oberholtzer and Dan, Manheim, Pa., Grace Mikayla (first child), Oct. 17.

Eberly, Kathy Nussbaum and Chad, East Earl, Pa., Kobi John (first child), Aug. 15.

Erb, Jill Newcomer and Chris, Goshen, Ind., Austin Mitchell (third child), Oct. 8.

Gehman, Deb Warfel and Dave, Ulysses, Pa., Derek Matthew (second child), Aug. 25.

Harnish, Nina Kaufman and Craig, Leola, Pa., Adam Kaufman (second child), Oct. 19.

Hawkins, Charlotte Christophel and Matthew, Battle Creek, Mich., Caleb Allen (fourth child), Oct. 11.

Heydon, Carolyn Horst, Elkhart, Ind., Robert, born June 6, 1992, and Amber Tsahi, born Sept. 15, 1994, both received for adoption June 17, 1996.

Miller, Kelly Shaffer and Tim, Manheim, Pa., Julia Hope (third child), Sept. 30.

Miller, Debra and James, San Antonio, Tex., Lucas James (second child), July 14.

Morton, Karla and Craig, Harleysville, Pa., Nathan Paul (fourth child), Oct. 23.

Myer, Kathy Cassel and Kervin, Columbia, Pa., Brady Kenneth (third child), Oct. 18.

Nissley, Carolyn Martin and Gareth, Indianapolis, Ind., (twins) Jared Martin and Ethan Martin (third and fourth children), Oct. 1.

Pfile, Jodi Meabon and Brian, Gohanno, Ohio, Jordan Marie (second child), July 15.

Reinford, Mary Craft and Jerry, Schwenksville, Pa., Melissa Lynne (fourth child), Sept. 20.

Rieman, Eileen Zuercher and Roger, Gainesville, Fla., Joy Nicole (first child), Sept. 10.

Rollison, Tracey Davis and Doug, Indianapolis, Ind., Alexander Jasper Davis (first child), Sept. 30.

Shore, Joylynn and Toby, Telford, Pa., Kylie Sera (first child), Oct. 18.

Sommers, Sherry Schlabach and Steve, Hartville, Ohio, Robin Sierra (second child), Oct. 1.

Tothero, Lisa Follett and Jeff, Harrisburg, Pa., Jenna Louise (second child), Dec. 12, 1995.

Troyer, Linda Smith and Mark, Waterford, Pa., Colton Dean (third child), Sept. 17.

PLANNED GIVING

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Wagler, Tammy Kunz and Reg, New Hamburg, Ont., Shelby Katherine (first child), May 23.

Wittmer, Trishea Yoder and Shawn, Uniontown, Ohio, Hunter Allen (first child), Oct. 14.

Yoder, Marianne Kurtz and Randy, East Petersburg, Pa., Maria Renee (third child), Oct. 11.

MARRIAGES

Benner-Detweiler: Kelly Benner, Telford, Pa. (Franconia), and Ray Detweiler, Blooming Glen, Pa. (Deep Run East), Oct. 12, by John M. Ehst.

Blough-Kohan: Michael Blough, Harrisonburg, Va. (Carpenter Park), and Christiane Kohan, Harrisonburg, Va. (Carpenter Park), Oct. 12, by Marvin L. Kaufman.

Borges-Massanari: Martin Borges, Kayenta, Ariz., and Analisa Massanari, Kayenta, Ariz. (First), Oct. 5, by Louise Westfall.

Carr-Schertz: Rick Carr, Eureka, Ill., and Jill Schertz, Lowpoint, Ill. (Metamora), Oct. 12.

Cavanaugh-Detweiler: Stephen Cavanaugh, Richmond, Va. (Kingview), and Monica Detweiler, Newton, Kan. (Whitestone), Oct. 15, by Johannes van der Meer.

Cressman-Glendinning: Julie Cressman, New Hamburg, Ont. (Nith Valley), and Daniel Glendinning, Plattsville, Ont. (United), Oct. 19, by Arthur Davies and Vernon Brubacher.

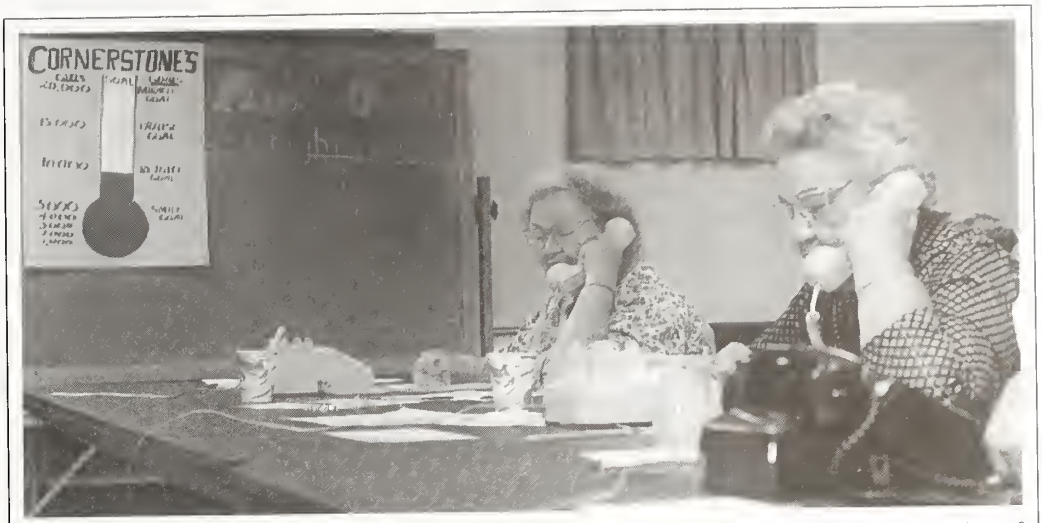
Frederick-Gearhart: John Frederick, Johnstown, Pa. (Carpenter Park), and Kathleen Gearhart, Hollsopple, Pa. (Lutheran), July 28, by Marvin L. Kaufman.

Gascho-Yvan: Christy Gascho, Kitchener, Ont. (Breslau), and Aubin Yvan, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 5, by Jan Steckley.

Gensemer-Jones: Gayle Gensemer, Pottstown, Pa. (Boyertown), and Karlton Jones, Pottstown, Pa. (Boyertown), Oct. 19, by Nelson J. Shenk.

Godshall-Hunsberger: Jennifer S. Godshall, Silverdale, Pa. (Blooming Glen), and D. Keith Hunsberger, Telford, Pa. (Blooming Glen), Oct. 19, by Truman H. Brunk Jr.

Goshow-Reid: Brian K. Goshow, Souderton, Pa. (Blooming Glen), and Beth Reid, Myrtle Beach, S.C. (Cape Christian Fellowship), Oct. 19, by Dennis Gingrich.



The phone is for you. *Exton, Pa. (EMM)*—Mildred Herr (left) and Pauline Stoltzfus of Paradise (Pa.) Mennonite Church, make calls as part of a major phone outreach throughout suburban Philadelphia communities to invite people to the first worship service of Cornerstone Cel*ebration* Church on Nov. 17. Volunteers placed 18,000 calls to help Eastern Mennonite Missions church planters John and Mary Derstine during their "Phone's for You Outreach," held Sept. 16-Oct. 11. More than 16 Lancaster Mennonite and Altantic Coast Conference churches sent volunteers, who used 15 phones in the basement of Downing Hills Mennonite Church. Over 1,530 people agreed to receive mailings about the new church, which will meet at a hotel near Exton. The Derstines are now sending a series of five mailings to those who agreed to receive them.—*Carol L. Wert*

Herriot-Lichty: Emily M. Herriot, San Antonio, Tex. (San Antonio), and John M. Lichty, San Antonio, Tex. (San Antonio), Sept. 1, by Richard J. Lichty.

Hofecker-Walsh: Scott Hofecker, Hollsopple, Pa. (Carpenter Park), and Jennifer Walsh, Johnstown, Pa., Aug. 10, by Marvin L. Kaufman.

Moore-Snavely: Julie Moore, Lancaster, Pa., and Daryl Snavely, Lancaster, Pa. (Lititz), Oct. 19, by J. Clair Hollinger and Robert Salsgiver.

Reimer-Yantzi: John Reimer, Kitchener, Ont. (First), and Lorie Yantzi, Stratford, Ont. (East Zorra), June 29, by Glenn Brubacher and Rudy Baergen.

Schmidt-Shoemaker: Travis Schmidt, Kitchener, Ont. (Breslau), and Cheryl Shoemaker, Kitchener, Ont., Sept. 28, by Jan Steckley.

DEATHS

Bontrager, Alma G. Shantz, 90, Fairview, Mich. Born: April 23, 1906, Kitchener, Ont., to Annanias and Anna Steckle Shantz. Died: Oct. 14, 1996, West Branch, Mich., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—children: Roger, Marvin, Shirley Cassel; stepson: Lyle Bontrager; brothers and sisters: Ernie, Clifford, Ada, Edna; 17 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Floyd F. Bontrager (husband). Funeral: Oct. 17, Fairview Mennonite Church, by Randy Detweiler. Burial: Fairview Cemetery.

Geiser, Wilson C., 68, Kidron, Ohio. Born: March 22, 1928, Kidron, Ohio, to William and Clara Gerber Geiser. Died: Oct. 17, 1996, Kidron, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—wife: Velma E. Thomas Geiser; daughters: Vernelda Weber, Lucy Lehman; brothers and sisters: Leonard, Ernest, Stella Beals, Mabel Himes; 3 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Oct. 19, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, by Michael Amstutz and Richard Ross.

Grove, Sarah Hoover, 83, Markham, Ont. Born: March 9, 1913, Markham, Ont., to Joseph and Elizabeth Smith Hoover. Died: June 7, 1996, Markham, Ont., of heart failure. Survivors—children: Alvin, Margaret Stutzman, Elisabeth McKay, Erle; 11 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Thomas Grove (husband). Funeral and burial: June 12, Wideman Mennonite Church, by Lawrence Burkholder.

Hershey, Jacob S., 92, Rothsville, Pa. Born: Sept. 5, 1904, Roaring Spring, Pa., to Jacob H. and Carrie Binn Sutton Hershey. Died: Oct. 3, 1996, Rothsville, Pa. Survivors—wife: Nora Snavely Hershey; daughters: Carrie Twilla Hershey Strickler, Jean Louise Hershey Buckwalter; 5 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Lititz Mennonite Church. Funeral: Oct. 7, Spacht Funeral Home, by Dennis W. Ernest and Jacob Frederick. Burial: Hess Mennonite Church Cemetery.

High, Daniel W., 84, Lancaster, Pa. Born: Aug. 28, 1912, Lancaster, Pa., to David F. and Anna Weaver High. Died: Sept. 16, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—wife: Nora Becher High; children: Warren, Curvin, Pauline Winters, Carl, Rhoda Yost, Lorraine Stoltzfus; 17 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Sept. 20, Stumptown Mennonite Church, by Leon Oberholtzer, Luke Nolt, Don Sensenig, and Don Good.

Newspaper

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What will get us to the shore?

"Given the present growth rate, by the year 2000, the majority of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ will be outside of Europe and North America," Mennonite missiologist Wilbert Shenk writes in this issue (see pages 6-7).

That statistic has been with us long enough now that we've begun to feel good about it. We Mennonites like the idea of being part of a growing peoplehood. We are proud that our church is scattered around the world. And, as Shenk notes, because of the past 150 years of European and North American Mennonite missions, we can also take some credit for this spread of the gospel.

With Mennonites and Brethren in Christ now circling the globe, new words and ideas are beginning to enter our consciousness. We talk about being partners in mission with Mennonites in other countries. We say we can learn from them. We tell each other we must listen to what they say.

What they say, however, may not always be what we want to hear. In this issue (see page 1), Paulus Widjaja, a Mennonite leader from Indonesia, dares to say some of this. Widjaja calls into question even the assumptions by which we North American Mennonites begin to talk with our counterparts around the world—assumptions like: we know what to do; we know how to do it; even more basic, we know what partnership is and how it should be expressed in a variety of cultures.

Widjaja's words are not easy ones to hear for those of us used to saying when, where, and how things should be done. Because we have the resources, which means we also have the power, we North American Mennonites have come to think of our way as normative, regarding even our language as the one that should and needs to be used.

Not so, says Widjaja. There are other ways to do things, ways that fit better into other cultures. To work in them, we North Americans will have to give up not only our assumptions but also our power.

How do we do this? How do we swim together toward the shore?

It's certainly not by asking our mission agencies and our missionaries to try harder. As Shenk notes, they have done a good job on our behalf. They have done what we asked them to do.

No, the first stroke in this swim is up to each of us, operating in new ways with new assumptions. I find the key in this from Widjaja: "An increase in numbers for the benefit of Christianity will be more likely to increase funding for foreign missions, but a decrease in numbers will also decrease funding."

Widjaja has identified something all our mission agencies know but seldom talk about: nothing brings contributions like stories of success. Conversely, no numbers, little money. While these agencies do not make decisions solely on this premise, it's there, most often operating in the subconscious background.

True partnership means giving up this need to control, even by those of us who only give of our money to missions through the local congregation. If we want to be true partners, we must be willing to allow Mennonites in another culture to determine how our resources, i.e., our money, will be used.

Can we do it? Our record has not been good. Two years ago, *Gospel Herald* carried an article in which a Mennonite Central Committee employee told of struggling to decide whether to send money to Vietnam to build both a church and a pagoda. When MCC consulted with the local church, Christians there said they were eager to rebuild. But for the sake of community relations, they asked for an equal amount to be used to renovate the local Buddhist pagoda.

MCC administrators were nervous when that article appeared. They feared criticism as well as a drop in funds. Some of both happened. But *Gospel Herald* also forwarded at least one check to MCC from a reader who wanted to support an agency willing to ask for and listen to local advice.

These are new waters we swim in today. One of the more difficult things for North American Mennonites will be to admit we don't know the strokes. We used to tell others how to swim. Now we are being told we need help ourselves.

Getting this help is the only way we will get to the shore. Whether or not we are willing to try will determine if we are really glad that "by the year 2000, the majority of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ will be outside of Europe and North America."—*jlp*

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November 19, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

The dollars we return to the Lord's work will not have the same purchasing power they did when we received them. But our goal has been to return as much as possible to the kingdom.

Finances on the table:

Figuring out when enough is enough

Core values and guiding principles for determining how much a family needs to keep for itself and how much can be devoted to kingdom work in various ways.

by Mary and John Martin

Each year in either October (Canada) or November (United States), North Americans pause at Thanksgiving to consider God's goodness and forgiveness and the material benefits we have received. Last year our family also reflected on the question: "When is enough really enough?" We did this by looking at our finances and trying to discern how to be good stewards of our resources.

After our one son and daughter-in-law served us the traditional Thanksgiving meal, our three children and their spouses gathered around the dining room table for a family council—just as we have done now over the past several years.

It all began 25 years ago when our children were teenagers. We gathered them for a family council when we were thinking of selling some rental property that we had developed on marginal time while John was serving full-time in church work. At that family council, we agreed to sell the real estate, pay off the debt on the business, and keep enough of the proceeds to

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Rachel Witmer:
The gift of a pastor must not be taken for granted 6

ANABAPTISTS IN INDIA:
Getting prepared for India 1997 8

MBCM celebrates 25 years, discusses antiracism initiatives . . . 11

Once each year this extended family holds a council, looking at the parents' savings and assets and determining how they can be best be saved and spent.

cover the debt on our house. The family agreed that we would put the balance of $33,000 into a deferred-payment charitable gift annuity to top off our Social Security benefits in the future.

Last Thanksgiving at our family council, we announced that we think the Lord has provided enough through disciplined savings so we could again remove some assets from our accumulated savings. After Mary's parents died some years ago, we inherited $13,000, which we invested in a church agency. Over the years that has doubled in value.

John's father also had some savings in a tax-exempt fund that we inherited. We told our children that we probably won't need all this combined inheritance, now valued at $66,000. Having more than enough for us, we told them we were thinking of investing that and a few more thousand from other savings in three more deferred-payment gift annuities for each of them to add to their Social Security in the years ahead. None of the children objected, but they did want to review the numbers to be sure that we were not being too generous, especially since our future needs are still unknown.

Our children did not need to ask to see the figures. When they were teenagers, we openly showed our finances to them in family councils. At least every five years since then, we have shared our family balance sheet with our children.

Part of this process has involved identifying core values to lead us in decision making about our finances and other areas. The following ideas have helped us in determining when enough is enough:

Spiritual disciplines. Before we got married, we agreed that we would read the Bible and pray together in an attempt to honor God through our lives. For more than four decades, we have continued daily devotions together and with our family.

Tithe and save. We also agreed that we would give a tithe of our income to God's work in the world. We also determined that we not only wanted to tithe 10 percent but also to save 15 percent.

Christian education. Another core value for us was providing education at a Christian school for our children. But we chose a church vocation, which included overseas mission and service assignments, a U.S. pastoral ministry, as well as various other full-time church institutional assignments. Our church institutions in the 1960s did not pay high wages. When we tried to live on 75 percent of our income and cover school tuition, we found that we needed something to supplement that income. That is why we began to manage rental properties.

One parent at home with young children. Mary worked outside the home before the children arrived, but another core value for us was for one parent to be in the home full-time when the children were young. In family councils since then, our children have shared their appreciation for having one parent at home full-time. After our youngest started school, Mary again began work part-time outside the home.

In addition to these core values, we have found it helpful to identify some guiding principles during a life of trying to determine what is enough:

Regardless of income, learn to live on 75 percent. In reviewing our tax reports, I have found that in the first decade of our marriage, our combined income averaged $3,900 per year. In the second decade, it was $6,600 per year, and Mary's part-time work in the third decade brought our combined earnings to $14,100 per year. In the fourth decade of our marriage, the combined income averaged $26,800. But we always lived on 75 percent of our income.

Changing circumstance can double the tithe. In a family council we agreed that when Mary went back to work outside the home, it was time to increase our tithe to 20 percent of our income. When we sold the real estate management business, we also realized that, although we tithed our annual income, we had never really calculated a tithe on the gain in value to the properties.

So we placed $33,000 of the sale proceeds in a deferred-payment charitable gift annuity with Mennonite Foundation. That amount is permanently outside of our estate. But in a few short months, when John reaches 65, it will pay us a monthly income for life. That will be important to us because, while our 15-year business enterprise and years in pastoral ministry were covered by Social Security, John also worked two decades for several church agencies which were not enrolled in Social Security.

Reduce or avoid taxes. That deferred payment annuity gave us a charitable deduction to help offset the capital gains tax we faced. It has grown with income compounded so today it is worth more than $150,000. We also try to legally avoid federal taxes because of the large portion which supports the military. We have

some tax breaks that many others do not have because John is an ordained minister.

But, as a matter of principle, to legally avoid taxes, we have placed our savings in tax-free investments, tax-sheltered Individual Retirement Accounts, and similar 401K instruments. These savings, with tax-free compounding, have grown to $200,000—by saving 15 percent of our annual income with interest compounding at an average rate of 6 percent over the years.

John's Social Security estimated current salary continuing until age 65 is $700 monthly, with a spousal allowance of nearly half of this figure. This seems low to us, but it is based on the fact that our earlier income was low, and in the years before Social Security became compulsory for church workers, some of our income was not reported.

Monitor the accumulation. We have rationalized that if we are to retire in the northern hemisphere, where climate does not minimize housing costs, we will need some additions to our Social Security stipend. Since 1971, when our first deferred payment annuity was written, we kept watching our balance sheet and our accumulated savings. We discovered that our savings were actually more than 15 percent of our income. So every three or four years we have written another deferred payment annuity—and our total accumulation outside our estate is equal to our present balance sheet.

Plan for future increasing needs. We now have at least ten annuities, which will each yield about $100 monthly. But the first begins at age 66, the next at age 67, and so on. Each time we write another annuity, we get a charitable deduction which helps us legally avoid federal taxes.

We also have decided that we might not need all that has accumulated in our names, so we have taken a portion of our savings and invested in mission deferred-payment gift annuities for each of our grandchildren. After their 16th birthday, each will receive an income the week after Christmas each year for life.

In our last family council, we reviewed with our children the amounts to help each of them: down payments toward house purchases as well as provisions for the grandchildren. Then we outlined the amount it would take from our current balance sheet to provide each of them with $400 monthly for life after age 65, noting that the same investment on our part would provide $500 monthly for life if they waited until age 70 to begin drawing. We invited each of them to choose how the contract should be drawn.

Save for a rainy day. Our present balance sheet includes savings twice as large as our current estimated house value. We have also planned for regular increases in our future income. We have not placed more of our accumulation in trust because we do not know what long-term care we will need.

Our current wills include 50 percent for charity and 50 percent for our children. Last Thanksgiving we told them that if we should die in a mutual disaster, the wills would provide each of them with about one-half of our current house value.

The dollars we return to the Lord's work will not have the same purchasing power that the dollars did that we received from the church during our lifetime, but it has become our goal to return as much as possible to kingdom work. It haunts us to know the tremendous needs in our world and yet to plan for our children and grandchildren through savings. Jesus spoke of taking no thought for tomorrow. To another he said, "Sell what you have and give to the poor."

We never believed that if we tithed or even doubled the tithed, God would bless us materially. But God certainly has been good to us and provided for our needs. Out of love for our children, our God, and our church, we must continue to ask the question, "When is enough really enough?"

Mary and John Martin are pseudonyms for a couple who have been in some kind of church work all their lives. They wish to remain anonymous since they have shared their personal finances so openly.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.—**Ps. 90:1-2, NRSV**

Gospel Herald

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READERS SAY

Thank you for your work, and blessings to you all. I wish that people, especially professing Christians and Mennonite people, would get away from the violent mentality that thinks we can solve our problems by shooting the messenger. If we are not careful, *Gospel Herald* staffers, along with the clergy, will be the vogue victims of the new millennium.

Daniel E. Lais
Lebanon, Ore.

I like nice people. So I hope that few of us take Marilyn Kennel's advice, ***Quit Being So Nice*** (Oct. 15). During my childhood in a family of 13, our parents rarely, if ever, gave us support for claims of injustice. Rather, we were reminded that "It takes two to fight." Right or wrong, this response forced us to view the situation differently.

Perhaps we Mennonites, in our quest for opportunity to defend justice and release the oppressed, should first examine the Scriptures. Financial greed and taking someone to law are two of the many issues the Scripture talks about. What does God require? A lawsuit?

For the past seven years, I have been sorely tested in my resolve to obey 1 Cor. 6:1—"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" (KJV). If my oppressors follow through with the threat of a second lawsuit, will I have the stamina to remain "nice" but obedient to Scripture?

What is the root of the problem, and what does God require? These are questions we Christians need to ask in response to all society's problems. I agree with Kennel that our response need not be nice. But it should be according to Scripture.

F. Arline Zimmerman
New Holland, Pa.

What's the Real Issue with TV and Computers? and ***Solitaire*** (Oct. 15). I too grew up in a home with no TV or radio. My father was very strict about that. When my brother and I were teens, we bought a radio. But we had to keep it in our bedroom; we could not play it in either the living room or the kitchen.

Cards were also forbidden in our home. One time I went to the local hot dog stand and found a few boys playing cards. I asked them to teach me how to play, because I thought it looked like fun. But one of the fellows said, "No, we're playing for money, and your dad wouldn't like that." So I never did learn to play cards. To this day I don't regret it.

As for the computer and the Internet, I don't know much about these. I'm not interested enough to learn.

Continue to give us great spiritual things to think about.

Carroll K. Walter
Quakertown, Pa.

What's the Real Issue with TV and Computers? (Oct. 15). I would take issue with Ron Helmuth when he says microcomputer technologies are just another, albeit highly advanced, form of electronic media. To me it's not useful to distinguish between technologies on the basis of their power source or methods of implementation.

I suggest that radio and television are more similar to the printing press than they are to the networked computer. The former are hierarchical mass media, based on centralized production and distribution. They marginalize the individual and promote consumerism as a result.

The relationship of the individual and these technologies is one in which the tool becomes the master and the tool user the subject. Their mass nature also dictates that they be big. This ensures control only by the very rich and the powerful.

These media broadcast in one direction only—from the top down. Individuals become passive consumers, listening to the commentary of self-styled experts, nodding ditto-heads in agreement.

By contrast, the world of the microcomputer is very different. When fully realized, it will change our lives more profoundly than all previous uses of computers put together.

For example, when decentralized, flexible manufacturing spreads from the realm of desktop publishing to other kinds of production, the obsolescence of mass production will become clear to all. Desktop publishing is merely the prototype for the desktop machine shop that will change the way work is done—and the entire model of our society in the coming years.

The difference between our relationship to the factory, radio, and television and our relationship to the microcomputer is the difference between authoritarianism and democracy. The computer is a creative engine that can be owned and operated by individuals, families, small groups, local cooperatives, or small businesses. Global computer networks can give voice to those on the margins and tie otherwise separate people into an interdependent whole. In short, a society structured around the model of networked microcomputers is more fertile ground for the continuing construction of the kingdom of God.

If we use computers to bring the level of viable economic activity back down to the level of the village or household, then we will gain control over the nature and time of our work. We regain the possibility to refuse to work on Sunday. We will regain mastery over the clock instead of being ruled by it.

Joel C. Ewy
North Newton, Kan.

In her letter (Oct. 22), Marian Harnly says her General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) "friend" doesn't want her in Sunday school classes or on committees if she continues to wear a veiling.

I can't believe a whole lot of GCs would object to a veiling—no GC I know would. The GCs I know would admire her for following her conscience—as would I.

Susan Sommer
Tremont, Ill.

From flaccid whiners to authentic witnesses

I was powerfully moved by this article by James E. Brenneman (Oct. 22). What he says resonates with me because I am numbered among the Anabaptists who witnessed so powerfully by martyrdom many years ago.

Without detracting form Brenneman's moving argument, I believe he missed one important dimension about witnessing effectively in our time. For a number of years, I've been impressed with how the Holy Spirit renewal has been accompanied by miracles used by God to win millions to Christ.

This current renewal has energized thousands of Christians to evangelize in every part of the world, apart from martyrdom. On balance, it appears to me that this modern renewal is even more fruitful in evangelization than Brenneman claims. God is working mightily in this generation too.

Roy S. Koch
Goshen, Ind.

I loved James E. Brenneman's article. It is true that we, as Christians entrusted with the knowledge and truth of Jesus, need to be telling the world about Christ—to the point of laying down our lives for our unbelieving neighbors. The obvious truth is that the American Mennonite church has been lukewarm—"neither hot nor cold" (Rev. 3:15).

In his editorial in the same issue, ***So Who Wants to Be a Martyr?*** J. Lorne Peachey asks, "Can a faithful church not be a persecuted church?" We must remember that Jesus promises us—in all four Gospels—that we *will* be persecuted. And Paul says, "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Persecution does not cause a growing church. But a church that is obedient, i.e., living a godly life, will be sharing its faith—and will be growing. Then persecution will result from the church's unashamed, unapologetic proclamation of the gospel.

We need to realize that it is our witness that causes persecution. And Paul gives us a litmus test: if we live gody lives, we will be persecuted. Maybe we, as a church, need to be honest and realize that our less than godly lives are resulting in stagnant church growth.

J. Bryan Hunsberger
Telford, Pa.

Thanks so much for your "meat and potatoes" articles that you so daringly print. I especially appreciated the wake-up call by James E. Brenneman.

We certainly are a bunch of whiners. We prefer to be the 1 Tim. 3:7 kind of person—"well thought of by outsiders"—but ignore Phil. 1:29: "For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well." And that includes me.

Doris Martin
Gettysburg, Pa.

Southeast Moves Toward Separation with Church (Oct. 29). When are members of this denomination going to understand that standards exist for a purpose, and that to make everything negotiable is to devalue the faith to a point not worth having?

There is a reason why the church is empowered and instructed to, at times, "be about the business of excluding and separating." The reason is to keep sin out of the church! Too often we just go along and get along, taking our cues from the fallen culture around us, not insisting that the guidelines given in Scripture be maintained.

The course Southeast Conference has embarked on has been a long and painful one. There are no truly good outcomes probably. But I applaud their commitment and willingness to face up to a difficult challenge. May the members of Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship come to see that their brothers and sisters in Southeast Conference truly love them.

Ed Robbins
Kokomo, Ind.

In the Oct. 15 installment of the series, "My Vision for the Mennonite Church," Janice Yordy-Suter points out that our relationship with Christ is of utmost importance. True. John M. Drescher stresses the importance of prayer and obedience to Christ. If these were acted upon, the great spiritual awakening that he mentions would occur.

In addition, H. Howard Witmer stresses being firmly rooted in Christ. Then he was so bold to suggest that we should not let the systems of society squeeze us into their mold.

If Mennonites would follow this teaching in every facet of their lives, they would be a great power for good. This is true for business, leisure, music, stewardship, and appearance. What a contribution to the world Mennonites could make!

Samuel Nafziger
Buffalo Head, Alta.

Surely the space had better be left blank than printing ***The Top 10 Rejected Names for the Integrated GC-MC Church*** (Oct. 8). This is poor taste. You can't be that short of good material.

Dorrine Deter
Morrison, Ill.

The gift of a pastor must

by Rachel Witmer

We need a covenant between pastors and congregations, incorporating deep care for the well-being of the other—a care which enables each to carry out the tasks assigned to them with joy and energy.

When our congregation was thrust into a difficult pastoral transition several months ago, I found myself thinking about my relationship as an elder to the pastor of the congregation in some new ways.

As a member of our congregation, I found that much which I had assumed could not be assumed, much that I thought mattered actually mattered little. I discovered that things I had hardly noticed mattered very much. Despite the terrible pain of the loss of our pastor and those who left in support of him, I see some things much more clearly now.

Although I disliked the discomfort experienced in the swirling vortex of passions follow-

not be taken for granted

ing the separation of both pastor and parishioners, I also find myself almost dreading a return to normalcy. For in normal times we often fail to attend to what is most central, and we fail to rely on the leading of the Holy Spirit, becoming content to proceed in a comfortable fashion.

What can we learn from this situation? What do I regret about how I related to the pastor? For what am I most grateful? What do I pledge to give to another pastor?

We need a covenant between pastors and elders and members. It is not a contract because it cannot be prescribed or demanded or legally enforced. This covenant may not mean a warm sentiment or even necessarily a close personal relationship. In fact, it may mean that I do not like all of the pastor's characteristics and style! But this covenant would incorporate a deep care for the well-being of the other—a care which enables each to carry out his or her tasks with energy and joy.

A covenant has two sides—it is a set of pledges to one another. So what do I need from my pastor?

I need my pastor's blessing in my presence and calling in the church. I need affirmation, and I need to be told what I do is right.

I need honest communication. I also need to be told when what I do is wrong. I need straight, clear, and loving feedback on my failings. I want to know about the future of my church because my life is bound up in it.

I need a sense of participation in and ownership of the work to which I give my energies. I need to know that I am being listened to, even though the pastor will not always agree with my point of view.

I need leadership and decision making. I need a pastor who will take both the risk and the responsibility of leading by listening to human voices and most certainly God's voice. I need clarity about where and how decisions will be made and how I can have input into them.

I need respect. I need a pastor who assumes that I care about our congregation, that I want the good of the whole, and that I speak out of genuine concern.

On the other side of the covenant, I will attempt to live out the following pledges in my relationships with those who are my future pastors.

I pledge to give a blessing. I want to remember my pastor regularly in prayer. I intend to speak some specific word of encouragement at least monthly, either orally or in writing. I want pastors to know that I value the life's energy that they are giving to my congregation and I pray routinely for the blessing of God to be evident in their work and life. I pray that their work will be lifegiving and not draining. I promise to cultivate a spirit in me which sees them as one of God's good gifts to me.

I pledge to give honest feedback. I intend to be clear about my views and feelings. I do not want to let things build up so a silent, invisible barrier prevents communication. I pledge to seek discernment on what is important to say and what is not.

I pledge to respect their charge—a charge to shape our mission and the overall direction of our lives together. I confess that I may be tempted to assume that I see things more clearly than they do. I will try to remember that, when they disagree with me, it may mean that they have listened to me and also to others who disagree with me. I will try to remember that no matter how much I seek to consider the good of the whole, my vantage point limits my vision.

I pledge a spirit of teamwork. I have noticed how easy it is for an adversarial assumption to creep into our relationship. It can then twist into a spirit so that either pastor or elder begins to feel resentful, ignored, unappreciated, unheard, or even exploited. I pledge to remind myself, again and again, that we are on the same team, working toward a common end.

God has given the church many gifts and among them is the gift of a pastor. It is a gift which often is taken for granted. But it is a gift that I value more highly today than ever.

Rachel Witmer is a nurse, and she and her husband, James, have four grown daughters. After reading the article, "The Gift of Administration Must Not Be Taken for Granted" by Ted Koontz, (Gospel Herald, *April 23, 1996), Witmer—who grew up in a pastor's home—wrote this article about pastoring, following closely the structure Koontz used.*

OF THE APPROXIMATELY 3,500 participants registered for India 1997, the next Mennonite World Conference assembly, 2,125 are Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from India. In order to introduce North American Mennonites to their sisters and brothers in this country, Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group, has compiled articles about various Mennonite and related groups within India.—**Editor**

The Mennonite Church: SETTING DIRECTIONS AFTER MISSION DAYS

India, the seventh-largest country in the world, was the site of the first overseas mission effort of the Mennonite Church (MC). What began as famine relief work of North American Mennonites in India in 1899 seeped into other areas: hospitals, orphanages, schools, and church structures. The last Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) workers returned earlier this decade.

The town of Dhamtari in the province of Madhya Pradesh, where the first Mennonite missionaries settled, continues to be a nerve center for Mennonites in India. The church-sponsored hospital and nursing school are widely known in the region, and the largest Mennonite congregation in India is located in Dhamtari.

A gradual and sometimes painful transfer of power from North American missionaries to Indian Mennonites began in the late 1930s when national leaders who wanted the power of self-determination began protesting the role of missionaries. By the early 1970s, Indians filled the key leadership positions in the church.

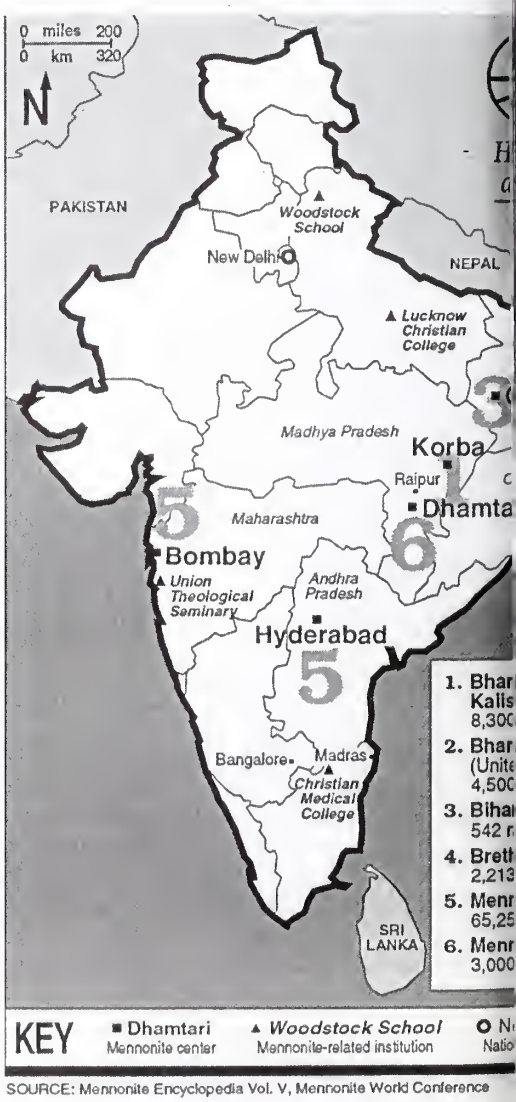
Two conferences of Mennonites in India are associated with the Mennonite Church: the Mennonite Church in India (MCI) in the Dhamtari area of Madhya Pradesh, and the Bihar Mennonite Mandli (BMM) which was formed as an outreach of the MCI (then known as the American Mennonite Mission) in 1947. Though the two conferences are divided most clearly by their locations in different provinces, other differences mark the two groups as well. Members of MCI come from largely Hindu roots, while members of BMM come from tribal, animistic groups. Members of BMM are generally from lower castes and therefore lower economic positions than their southern neighbors.

Mennonite Church in India. There are about 3,000 members in 19 congregations in the Mennonite Church of India. A national delegate represented the MCI at a Mennonite World Conference assembly for the first time in 1948, marking the beginning of an era of increased participation by nationals in the direction of the church, and the eventual and complete transfer of leadership. A new constitution, which took effect July 1, 1952, merged the mission and the church into one.

Today the MCI holds annual delegate meetings of representatives, and the ministries of the conference are carried out by educational and medical boards that run the various institutions of the church. The Mennonite Church in India has experienced two divisions, both of which centered around administrative disputes.

Bihar Mennonite Mandli. The Bihar Mennonites will celebrate the conference's 50th anniversary in January and will be joined by a tour group from MBM. There are 542 members in 14 congregations in the Bihar conference, located in Palamau and Ranchi districts. Good Books, with headquarters in Ranchi, is a chain of bookstores carrying religious literature and school books operated by Bihar Mennonite Mandli. The operation was founded by MBM workers Paul and Esther Kniss.

The Bihar conference operates student hostels, a hospital in the Palamau district, and a service agency in Chandwa.—*Valerie Weaver*



SOURCE: Mennonite Encyclopedia Vol. V, Mennonite World Conference

Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India: PEACE CHURCH COALITION RESPONDS TO NEED

The six Mennonite World Conference-member churches in India have joined to form the Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India (MCSFI). MCSFI and its member churches are hosting India 1997.

MCSFI was created in 1963 at a consultation in Calcutta by Orie Miller, former executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Since then, it has responded to victims of natural disasters and organized retreats and conferences.

In 1966, MCSFI organized the first all-India Mennonite peace conference, which included representatives of other historic peace churches in the country and the Fellowship of Reconciliation in India. MCSFI has also sent volunteers to Vietnam and Cambodia and school kits to Cambodia. MCC has been associated with MCSFI since its inception, working together in vocational training, disaster relief, and International Visitor Exchange Program and Youth Discovery Teams. MCC provides some financial support.

—*Rich Preheim*

(continued on page 15)

भारत 1997

General Conference Mennonite Church:
FROM 'SOUP, SOAP, AND SALVATION' TO INDIAN LEADERSHIP

General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) missionary work in India included in its early days what pioneer P. A. Penner called "soup, soap, and salvation": feeding the hungry, offering rudimentary health care, and bringing the gospel to people of Hindu background. The efforts became focused on education, medical care, and church work.

Education: The GC schools, primary and secondary, are now supported by the government; however, Beacon School, the last organized by the Mennonite Mission, is a successful private school in Korba funded by tuition dollars.

The Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) of the General Conference Mennonite Church assisted in the support of Premanand Bagh at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind. Bagh will return to the faculty of Allahabad Bible Seminary at the end of his studies. Shekhar Singh from the faculty of Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, is a candidate for study at AMBS.

Also, Ron Flaming, currently principal of Woodstock School in Mussoorie, is supported by COM.

Medical care: The two GC hospitals at Champa and Jagdeeshpur are under the management of the Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA). Although many of the church leaders regretted that the hospitals had been turned over to this organization rather than to the Indian church, the hospitals are thriving under EHA management. COM helps with modest funding.

Church: Although the effectiveness of the Bharatiya General Conference Mennonite Church is weakened as two groups claim leadership, the church is maturing as those handling funds are held accountable and the church conference disciplines its own. With 22 congregations in 55 places of worship, the church community numbers 12,000. COM helps fund a program of evangelism and church planting. Many of the sons and daughters of village Christians are moving to urban areas.—*Ruth Unrau*

United Missionary Church of India:
CONTINUING ITS ANABAPTIST AFFILIATION

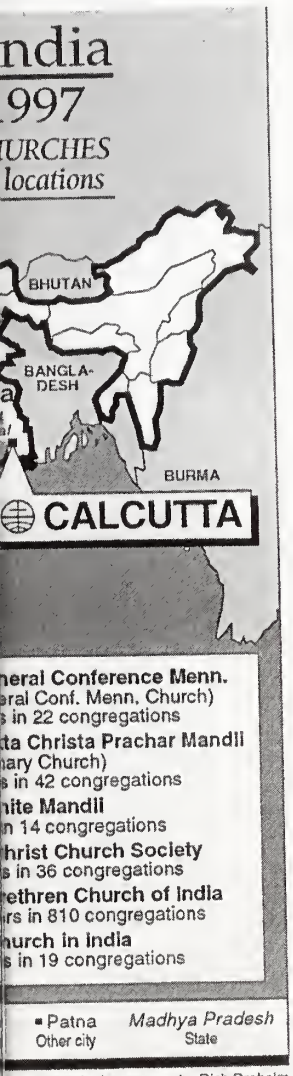
While its parent body has left its Anabaptist heritage, the United Missionary Church in India has maintained its Mennonite affiliation and is one of the host churches for India 1997, the Mennonite World Conference assembly to be held in Calcutta Jan. 6-12. The church has its headquarters in the city.

The United Missionary Church in India grew out of mission efforts started shortly after the turn of the century by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Missionary Church Association. The Mennonite Brethren in Christ changed its name to the United Missionary Church in 1947 and then merged with the Missionary Church Association in 1969 to form the Missionary Church, known in Canada as the Evangelical Missionary Church.

The first United Missionary Society site was 200 miles west of Calcutta, working among Hindus and animists. By 1943, the church had 300 believers, and services were being held at five locations. Other mission efforts included education and medical work. In 1948, the United Missionary Society assumed the work of the Hephzibah Faith Missionary Association in India, which had been started in 1893 by a Brethren in Christ family.

By 1973, all missionaries were gone, and the church was entirely under indigenous leadership.

The United Missionary Church of India has about 4,500 members and 42 congregations, most in Calcutta and the state of West Bengal and the neighboring state of Bihar. Work is done in five languages.—*Rich Preheim*



Meetinghouse map by Rich Preheim

Mennonite Brethren:
GROWTH IN MIDST OF DISADVANTAGES

The Mennonite Brethren Church in India "offers a glimpse of a church under disadvantageous circumstances that is growing and exploding," says Edmund Janzen, chair of the International Committee of Mennonite Brethren.

Early missionaries to India developed a strategy of systematic village evangelism that is still followed today. In 1991, the India conference numbered 45,000 members with 70 evangelists reaching 300 villages. Four years later, the conference had grown to 65,000 members with 103 Indian couples evangelizing more than 500 villages.

India was the first and only foreign mission of the Mennonite Brethren for 20 years, from 1899-1919. The denomination assumed ministry responsibility for a 30-by-100 mile section of the province of Andhra Pradesh.

Missionaries Abraham and Maria Friesen were sent from the Molotschna Colony in the Ukraine in 1890. In 1899, the first North American foreign missionaries, N. N. and Susie Hiebert and Elizabeth Neufeld, were also sent to India.

Bible schools and seminaries were established in the early 1900s to prepare national leaders for the growing number of churches. Clinics, hospitals, and some social programs were established. Christian literature was printed and distributed, and radio broadcasts were begun. Today these ministries are supported by the Mennonite Brethren churches of India.

Present internal leadership conflicts have not hindered the growth of churches, according to some Mennonite Brethren workers.

Janzen says that the churches in India have much to teach North Americans about generosity.—*Connie Faber*

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MBCM board adopts antiracism initiatives, celebrates 25th anniversary

Elkhart, Ind. (MBCM)—The Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries (MBCM) has adopted an antiracism plan that emerged from staff involvement in Mennonite Central Committee's "Damascus Road" project.

During the Oct. 18-19 sessions, the MBCM board also wrestled with several issues related to integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church, and approved St. Louis, Mo., as the site for the 1999 Youth Convention.

MBCM's antiracism staff team brought 11 five-year goals and eight one-year objectives designed to help the agency "claim an antiracist identity . . . that enables us to lead congregations to become antiracist communities of faith in the world." Within the next year, policy proposals will be brought to the board mandating an antiracism statement in the bylaws and regular reviews of MBCM programs and ministries by an outside auditor.

The five-year plan calls on MBCM to develop grids to "evaluate how programs and projects fulfill the antiracism mission statement" and to ensure that current and future staff are committed to the antiracism mission statement.

Adoption of the goals and objectives followed a two-hour workshop presented by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. "Damascus Road" staff Jody Miller Shearer and Regina Shands Stoltzfus.

The MBCM board approved two of the three proposals for integrating some of MBCM's programs. A third proposal, which would integrate ministerial leadership staff in the next year, was tabled at the request of MBCM president Everett Thomas.

Tabled request. Thomas explained that last fall conference ministers asked MBCM to integrate the work done by Dale Stoltzfus and Anne Stuckey with GC ministerial leadership staff. "But with the change in leadership in the General Conference Mennonite Church and some new directions from the Integration Committee, it seems prudent that we take some time to consider the ramifications of the proposal developed last summer," said Thomas.

The proposal to integrate ministerial leadership offices would have provided a ministerial leadership commission for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and a separate leadership commission for MBCM and General Conference staff working in the United States. These two separate leadership commissions would have been coordinated by a North American council. The MBCM board will return to the proposal in March 1997 after further conversations with GC leaders.

Celebrations. A proposal to transfer the Youth Convention to a completely new Convention Board was approved. In addition, the MBCM board gave approval for continuing work on a plan which would transfer MBCM's Christian education work to the Commission on Education in Newton, Kan.

MBCM also celebrated its 25th birthday during the meetings. Ross Bender, first executive secretary for MBCM, and Rachel Fisher, first office manager, regaled the board and staff members with stories of the early days during a banquet on Friday evening. MBCM was created along with a new General Assembly and a new General Board at the 1971 Mennonite Church gathering in Kitchener, Ont.

Students represent colleges at India 1997

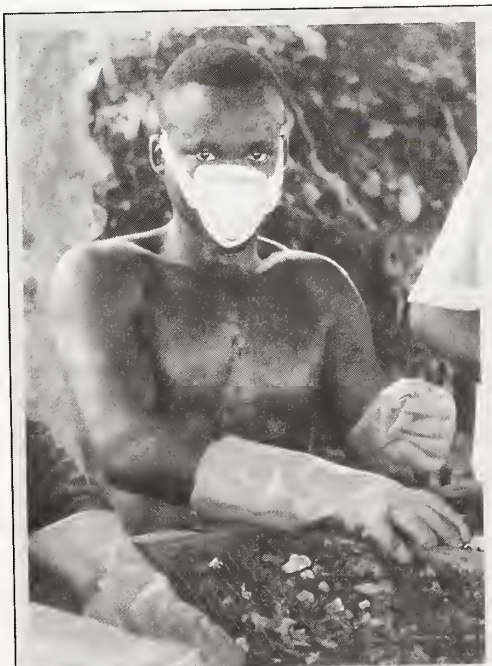
Scottdale, Pa.—The Mennonite Church-sponsored colleges and seminaries are each sponsoring several students to the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly, held in Calcutta, India, Jan. 6-12, 1997.

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) designated funds to help two students each from Goshen College, Hesston College, Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), and Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS). Each of the institutions is also providing financial support.

Planning began a year ago when Goshen College senior Reuben Shank sent a letter to the Mennonite Church General Board requesting churchwide support for Mennonite college students wanting to attend the event in Calcutta. "A significant number of us care deeply about the Mennonite Church and have a vision for its future," Shank wrote in the letter, which he also sent to leaders of other Mennonite organizations and colleges. "I believe that we should be represented at such an important event and that we have much to learn as well as much to contribute."

The students going to India 1997 are:

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary: Vicki Biggerstaff. ***Eastern Mennonite Seminary:*** Ted Greenawalt. ***Eastern Mennonite University:*** Hannah Gascho and Anna Versluis. ***Goshen College:*** Kristi Glick, Brooke Kandel, Danielle Miller, Rachel Miller, Jonathan Rich, Reuben Shank. ***Hesston College:*** Mark Hochstedler and Andrew Horst.



Garbage to gardens. *Hévié, Benin (MBM)*—Wearing heavy rubber gloves and a mask, a Beninese worker sorts through garbage at the central collection point of a garbage-recycling project in Benin. Mennonite Board of Missions worker Lynda Hollinger-Janzen helped to begin the project when she and others were concerned about community health and the transmission of disease from garbage dumped in swamps. For about 5 cents per family per month, workers removed more than 18,200 cubic meters of household garbage from nearly 1,600 courtyards in the first year of garbage collection, beginning in October 1994. Compost created at the project is used in a community garden and for commercial sale. The project has created more than 100 permanent and 200 temporary jobs and has gained national and international recognition. Next week's issue of *Gospel Herald* will have additional information.

The Gideon Project:

Year-long study shows Mennonites value education even as fewer of their youth attend church colleges

Elkhart, Ind. (MBE)—The Mennonite Church values higher education and its church colleges. Yet there has been a significant drop in the number of Mennonite college students enrolled in the church's schools.

These are among the findings of The Gideon Project, a year-long study of Mennonite students, congregational leaders, and pastors sponsored by the Mennonite Board of Education. MBE released findings of this study at a gathering in Baltimore, Md., Oct. 16-17.

MBE commissioned the study to understand changing college enrollment patterns. In 1980, more than half of Mennonite college students enrolled in Mennonite colleges. Today the figure is at about one-third.

Michael Wiese of the Church of the Nazarene, who has worked with enrollment issues of small church-related colleges, guided the study.

Using MBE historical data, Wiese discovered that only 144 out of some 1,100 Mennonite congregations actively participate in Mennonite higher education. Participation was measured by (1) enrollment of their youth in Mennonite colleges; (2) financial giving to the colleges, and (3) providing financial aid to students directly.

Interest in spirituality. The Gideon Project also found that both congregational leaders and students share an interest in the spiritual atmosphere and expressions of Christian lifestyle at Mennonite colleges. Students, for example, listed these priorities for Mennonite higher education:

- educational quality;
- Christian lifestyle on campus;
- spiritual atmosphere on campus;
- personal and social development.

Affordability was identified as another critical issue for Mennonite students. The study discovered that some suppose that Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College, and Hesston College are among the most expensive colleges. MBE notes that the average yearly cost at a Mennonite college is $10,593, with financial aid averaging $4,833. This is below the average for most liberal arts colleges.

Students attending Mennonite colleges are more likely to say that it is important for them to attend a Mennonite congregation, the Gideon Project learned. They are also more likely to say that raising their children in the church is important. Further, students at Mennonite colleges are more likely to be encouraged about the condition of the church.

In reporting the findings, Wiese noted that students at Mennonite colleges share a commitment to general Christian beliefs with their counterparts at non-Mennonite schools. However, they agree more with traditional Anabaptist beliefs like believers baptism and pacifism.

Sometimes out of step. The survey also shows that, while colleges are serving a segment of the church, they are not in step with all congregations. Wiese suggested that "the Mennonite colleges attract a certain type. Not all Mennonites fit the colleges. The colleges do not fit all the Mennonites."

After hearing these findings at the Baltimore meeting, Shirley Showalter, president-elect of Goshen College, responded that colleges must be thoughtful in defining the width of the spectrum of prospective students. On the one hand, Showalter said, if the colleges admit only students from a narrow spectrum, many will be excluded. But if the spectrum is too wide, a college can lose its uniqueness.

"In the past 75 years, Mennonite colleges have played an important role in passing to youth the meaning of our faith," said Orville Yoder, president of MBE. "The colleges have provided many of the denomination's leaders and helped to shape its thinking. If youth in increasing numbers attend non-Mennonite colleges, then the church must provide a place and program for their faith development."

—*J. Daniel Hess and Don Garber*

Faith and health link Shirati and Lancaster. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Jessica Mirando displays a Tanzanian wall-hanging. Mirando became a friend to Miriam Oberholtzer, Eastern Mennonite Missions worker in Shirati, Tanzania, who recently returned to Elizabethtown, Pa. In August 1995, Mirando was admitted to the Shirati Hospital with a swollen face and left arm. Mystified by her symptoms, doctors at the hospital sent her to a specialist, who determined that Mirando suffers from a type of heart problem. Oberholtzer wrote to several members of her congregation, Risser Mennonite Church in Elizabethtown, and asked them to pray for Mirando. One of those members, who also suffers from a heart illness, now regularly corresponds with Mirando.

Oberholtzer says that the 13-year-old, who still struggles with her health, has inspired her faith. "Jessica's trust in the Lord and concern for others was a blessing and challenge to me," she says. "I have been richly blessed to have been called to live among my Tanzanian brothers and sisters, and I pray that I will be able to put into practice the lessons they taught me."

Mennonite group sells 500 South Main to Elkhart Housing Partnership

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—After the high bidder at a May 1 auction could not meet three deadlines to secure financing, the Elkhart Housing Partnership has bought the 500 S. Main building from a Mennonite ownership group.

Although the closing documents weren't finalized until Oct. 10, the private, not-for-profit organization assumed management of the building on Oct. 1 from the Mennonite ownership group, which included Goshen-based Greencroft, Inc., and the Mennonite Boards of Congregational Ministries, Education, and Missions. The purchase price for the building was not disclosed.

The new owners will invest about $5 million into the structure in both purchase and renovation costs, according to Phil Dumouchel, director of the Elkhart Housing Partnership.

Businessman Ronald Koehler bid $962,000 for the building at a May 1 auction, securing his bid with a nonrefundable $150,000 deposit. When various sources denied financing to the South Bend motel owner and landlord, Koehler and the Mennonite ownership group reached a negotiated settlement. Koehler will receive an undisclosed portion of his $150,000 deposit, while the ownership group will keep the rest to cover auction expenses.

What results from integration. At the same time, the Elkhart Housing Partnership continued to pursue a negotiated purchase of the nine-story building. The partnership plans to rent 83 apartments in the facility to low-income adults over the age of 55.

The three Mennonite Church boards have signed renewable three-year leases, which also contain opt-out clauses. None expected the sale to require a move from the facility, although each has reduced its rented space to reduce costs.

"When it became clear to us that because of the age of the building and the needed repairs it would make it necessary for us to invest considerably more in overhead, we determined it wasn't in our best interest to continue to be an owner of the building," says Stanley W. Green, MBM president. "We decided to negotiate leases until we see what results from integration discussions."

—Tom Price with Christy Risser

Peace ambassadors from Japan visit Elkhart

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—"Individuals can do something for peace if we talk face-to-face. If we build up friendship, we can make a more peaceful world," Michiko Yamane from Nagasaki, Japan, said in a visit to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on Oct. 3.

Yamane is a member of a team of four peace ambassadors from Japan who visited Elkhart and Goshen in October. They were sent to the U.S. by the World Friendship Center, a center based in Hiroshima which seeks to promote friendship and understanding between the U.S. and Japan.

Fumiko Sora, a retired teacher, is the only *hibakusha* (survivor of the atomic bomb) on the team. As a junior high teacher, Sora pioneered a three-year peace curriculum. It was important, she explained, for Japanese children to be taught the facts about the roots of World War II. "One way to educate for peace," she said, "is to teach the cause of war."

In the curriculum that Sora initiated with the help of other teachers, children learned about Japan's invasion and oppression of other Asian countries as a contributing factor to World War II. "For many years, I told only of the disaster of the war," Sora said. "But I came to know it is not an effective way to education for peace. We have to tell the facts of history and the cause of war so the students know how to build up peace."

'Earth-shattering.' Alice Ruth Ramseyer, retired missionary who served with the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission in Japan, explained, "This approach was earth-shattering when Fumiko Sora began teaching in this way. She is one of the first people in Hiroshima to talk about this [Japan's responsibility in the war]," Ramseyer said.

The World Friendship Center began in Hiroshima in 1965 to build friendships and understanding between the U.S. and Japan.—*Mary Klassen*

Controversy over house brought to a close

Goshen, Ind. (GC)—The Goshen College (GC) board of overseers unanimously voted Oct. 26 to rescind its action to build a presidential house on the site of a college cabin after finding out that the donors of the land intended it for recreation.

Student and faculty response to the issue, first published in the *Record* student newspaper and followed by a public rally drawing area media coverage, spawned further research into the restrictions on the building site. While no formal restrictions had been placed on the property, it became clear that the intent of the original donors of the land was to keep the property free of further development.

The GC board has considered the current house unsuitable for presidential hosting responsibilities for several years. In June the board requested incoming interim president Henry D. Weaver to build a new home on the portion of college-owned property along the Elkhart River.

In a news conference following the most recent board meetings, Weaver and board president Myrl Nofziger praised student response to the issue.

Students, administration, faculty, and staff celebrated the conclusion of the issue at the college cabin Oct. 28, at the suggestion of president-elect Shirley H. Showalter. Members of the board also footed the bill for snacks at the party.—*Lyle Miller*

BMC celebrates twentieth anniversary

Washington, D.C.—Two hundred people recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Brethren / Mennonite Council of Lesbian and Gay Concerns (BMC). "Piecing New Patterns from Old Cloth" was the theme for the sixth BMC convention, held in Washington, D.C., Oct. 11-13.

Activities at the convention included worship services, a banquet and 20th anniversary party, a charity auction that raised $2,600 for BMC, and an opportunity to participate in an AIDS candlelight vigil with 150,000 other people in the city.

Workshops were held throughout the weekend, covering topics such as gay and lesbian relationships, HIV and family issues, grief and spiritual growth, developing local BMC groups, and groups for supportive parents and friends.

BMC provides support for Brethren and Mennonite gay, lesbian, and bisexual people and their parents, spouses, relatives, and friends.—*Jim Sauder*

- **Joint worker appointed.** David Moser, the first worker in Europe appointed jointly by Mennonite Board of Missions (Mennonite Church) and Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference Mennonite Church), leaves for Belfast, Northern Ireland, on Dec. 1. Moser will serve a three-year term as assistant pastor of Springfield Road Methodist Church, which sits on the dividing line between Protestant and Roman Catholic communities.

- **Churches begin course.** The Mexico City Mennonite Churches have begun a one-year course on conflict resolution. Some 40 Mennonites from churches in Mexico City and Puebla and from the church's new Bible institute gathered in August to attend the first of five seminars, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee. Participants have committed themselves to become promoters of conflict resolution among their churches, families, and friends.

- **Pentagon witness planned.** Participants in the Peacemaker Congress III in Washington, D.C., Dec. 27-30 will dramatize the cost of U.S. military policies. The event will include bringing various objects like violent toys and unemployment checks to the Pentagon steps to "challenge the myth that violence deters evil and produces peace," according to a release from Christian Peacemaker Teams. Congregations and institutions are invited to send symbols of violence from their communities to be used in the event. More information is available from 312 455-1199.

- **MCC ships supplies to Ukraine.** Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) recently shipped food and supplies valued at $133,000 (U.S.) to children's homes in Makeyevka, a city in southeast Ukraine. MCC partner Light of Resurrection, a Baptist mission, will distribute the supplies. The shipment is MCC's third largest this year.

- **Estate planning.** That is the subject of a Michiana MEDA dinner meeting scheduled for Dec. 5, 1996, at Das Dutchman Essenhaus, Middlebury, Ind. A panel—Katherine Grusy, Al Yoder, and Myrl Nofziger—will discuss the topic through personal stories. Reservations and more information available from Boyd Nelson at 219 537-4334.

- **Hesston to nationals.** Hesston (Kan.) College's volleyball team earned a trip to a national tournament with a three-game win over Central College in McPherson, Kan. on Nov. 2. The Hesston team was scheduled to compete Nov. 15-16 against several other regional winners for a Division III title in the NJCAA Region VI. Dennis Wyse coaches the team; players are Janelle Dailey, Cindy Maury, Jaime Miller, Heather Goering, Wendy Wenger, Sherri and Sheila Delagrange, Andrea Weaver, and Julie Stoltzfus.

NEW MEMBERS

Freeport, Ill.: Jennifer Oyer, Nicholas Weber, Erin Schult, and Vicki Zimmerman.
Marion, Shipshewana, Ind.: Lloyd Miller.
Tressler, Greenwood, Del.: Sharon and Jolene Workman and David Miller.
Yoder, Haven, Kan.: Emery and Mary Ellen Yoder.

BIRTHS

Corkery, Doris Shenk and Caleb, Baltimore, Md., Chloe Ann (first child), Oct. 15.
Eubanks, Amy Rich and Jeff, Crawfordsville, Iowa, Emma Renea (first child), Oct. 6.
Gerber, Heather Baan and Richard, Stratford, Ont., Jordan Richard (first child), Oct. 10.
Grieser, Joan Fetterman and Bill, Wauseon, Ohio, Kathleen Jean (second child), Oct. 21.
Hochstetler, Jill Rohr and Caleb, Dundee, Ohio, Victoria Eileen (third child), Oct. 12.
Mast, Susan Hochstedler and John, Kingsport, Tenn., Jacob Forrest (first child), Oct. 27.
Richard, Ann McCrum and Gary, Warsaw, Ind., Kathryn Marie (third child), Oct. 18.
Ropp, Donna Schneider and Brian, Tavistock, Ont., Jessica Lynn (first child), Sept. 30.
Stevens, Amy Stuckey and Mark, Grand Rapids, Ohio, Melissa Renee (second child), Oct. 27.
Stutzman, Lisa Miller and Larry, Wooster, Ohio, Madison Lee (first child), Oct. 26.
Yoder, Julie Gehman and J. Dean, Morwood, Pa., Joshua Dalton (second child), Aug. 1.
Yoder, Nancy Tyler and J. David, Buckley, Wash., Mikayla Paige (second child), Oct. 18.

MARRIAGES

Beck-Liechty: Tim Beck, Archbold, Ohio (Central), and Jamie Liechty, Archbold, Ohio (United Church of Christ), Oct. 19, by David Voll.
Bell-King: Tiffany Bell, Bellefontaine, Ohio, and Gary King, Bellefontaine, Ohio (South Union), Oct. 12, by Randy Reminder.
Boehme-Mast: Charles Boehme, Elkhart, Ind., and Mary Ellen Mast, Elkhart, Ind. (Clinton Frame), Oct. 19, by Robert Shreiner and Terry Diener.
Campbell-Delorme: Steven Joseph Campbell, Stratford, Ont. (Catholic), and Susan Lynn Delorme, Stratford, Ont. (Avon), Oct. 19, by Gary Horst.
Kauffman-Motzko: Jodi Kauffman, West Liberty, Ohio (South Union), and Dale Motzko, Minnesota, Oct. 26, by Randy Reminder.
King-Rutherford: Nedra King, Gordonville, Pa. (Maple Grove), and Ian Rutherford, Wilmore, Ky., Oct. 19, by Linford King.
LuangAmath-Zamora: Khanngeun LuangAmath, Upper Marlboro, Md. (Crown Hill), and Jorge Zamora (Catholic), Oct. 11, by Lester Sutter and Eldon King.
Martin-Smucker: Brenda Martin, Orrville, Ohio (Martins), and Darrell Smucker, Smithville, Ohio (Smithville), Oct. 27, by Glenn Steiner and Richard Ross.
Moberly-Schmidt: Lisa Moberly, Wellman, Iowa (East Union), and Greg Schmidt, Wellman, Iowa (East Union), Oct. 19, by Noah Helmuth.
Shrock-Slagell: Richard Shrock, Foosland, Ill. (East Bend), and Amy Slagell, Champaign, Ill. (Bethel, Ashley, Mont.), Oct. 26, by Calvin Kauffman and Joe Pendleton.

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DEATHS

Birkey, Harlan D., 78, Rantoul, Ill. Born: Oct. 4, 1918, Deer Creek, Ill., to Joseph C. and Ida Zehr Birkey. Died: Oct. 18, 1996, Urbana, Ill. Survivors—wife: Ruby Oyer Birkey; son: Joe; siblings: Leslie, Lois Bachman, Eleanor. Predeceased by: Joy (daughter). Funeral and burial: Oct. 21, East Bend Mennonite Church, by Cal Kaufman and Michael Dean.

Clemmer, Joseph M., 81, Franconia Twp., Pa. Born: May 23, 1915, Harleysville, Pa., to Allen and Alice Moyer Clemmer. Died: Oct. 23, 1996, Franconia Twp., Pa. Survivors—wife: Edith Alderfer Clemmer; children: Wesley, Dean, Doris Stoltzfus, Janet Zeager, Lucille Gehman; brothers and sisters: Jacob, William, Cyrus, Marvin, Mary Ellen Derstine, Betty Kupeerus, Alice Rittenhouse; 10 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 27, Franconia Mennonite Church, by Glen Alderfer and Steven C. Nyce. Burial: Towamencin Mennonite Church Cemetery.

DeBoer, Elisabeth Brouwer, 82, Fort Dodge, Iowa. Born: April 25, 1914, Oudeschoot, Friesland, The Netherlands, to Reitze Brouwer and Grietje Otter. Died: Oct. 16, 1996, Fort Dodge, Iowa, of pancreatic cancer. Survivors—children: Sid, Aaltje Zehr; sisters: Henny Veltman Brouwer, Beeuwkje Weers Brouwer; 4 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Bernard DeBoer (husband). Congregational membership: Evangelical Mennonite Church. Funeral: Oct. 19, Manson Mennonite Church, by Brad Schantz and Curt Kuhns. Burial: Rose Hill Cemetery.

Esh, Joseph M., 70, Stuarts Draft, Va. Born: Nov. 4, 1925, Belleville, Pa., to Marion S. and Lydia V. Zook Esh. Died: Oct. 24, Stuarts Draft, Va., of Lou Gehrig's disease. Survivors—wife: Ruth Weaver Esh; children: James, Myrliss, Crystal, Janet, Kay; 8 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Oct. 27, Mountain View Mennonite Church, by Phil Kanagy and Earl Monroe.

He was ordained in 1955, and pastored churches in Florida, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.

Green, Carrie Coder, 82. Born: Feb. 29, 1914, Collegeville, Pa., to Harvey and Carlotta Bideman Coder. Died: Sept. 29, 1996, Greentown, Ind. Predeceased by: Patty (daughter). Congregational membership: Parkview Mennonite Church. Funeral: Oct. 2, Greentown, Ind., by Ed Robbins. Burial: Greenlawn Cemetery.

Horst, Mary Leisey, 89, Lancaster, Pa. Born: March 8, 1907, Reamstown, Pa., to Oliver and Mary Leisey. Died: Oct. 18, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—children: Evelyn Shumaker, Roy, Carolyn Brubaker, Marilyn Denlinger, Lorraine Hostetler, Gladys, Gloria Rosenberger, Galen; 14 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Amos H. Horst Jr. (husband). Funeral and burial: Weaverland Mennonite Church, by Leon Hurst and Kenneth Martin.

Kennel, Lillian, 70, New Hamburg, Ont. Born: March 23, 1926, Wilmot Twp., Ont., to Albert and Catherine Erb Kennel. Died: Oct. 8, 1996, Tavistock, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—brother and sisters: Anson, Fanny Gingerich, Eileen Calvert. Funeral and burial: Oct. 11, Steinmann Mennonite Church, by Scott Brubaker-Zehr and Ingrid Loepp Thiessen.

Nafziger, Mabel Irene Egli, 88, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Aug. 6, 1908, Tazewell County, Ill., to John and Anna Riggenbach Egli. Died: Oct. 21, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivors—stepdaughter: Virginia Nafziger Doehrmann; 3 stepgrandchildren, 7 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Frank R. Nafziger (husband). Funeral: Oct. 24, Zion Mennonite Church, by Ron Guengerich and Dee Swartz. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Nitzsche, Katie Roth, 97, Hesston, Kan. Born: July 22, 1899, Milford, Neb., to Joe G. and Mary Roth. Died: Oct. 24, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—children: Willard, Dale, Opal Ripley, Mae Mumaw, Lois Selzer; brother and sister: Lloyd Roth, Mary Ann Erb; 16 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Albert Nitsche (husband). Funeral: Oct. 28, Schowalter Villa, by Mary Dyck, Wesley Jantz, and Lola Rosenberb. Burial: East Lawn Cemetery.

Pfile, Hazel I. Meinert, 81, Rockford, Ill. Born: Nov. 7, 1914, Davis, Ill., to George F. and Edith M. Goeke Meinert. Died: Oct. 13, 1996, Rockford, Ill. Survivors—children: Norman, Sylvia Pfile Eberle; 5 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Harry M. Pfile (husband). Funeral and burial:Oct. 16, Freeport Mennonite Church, by Dennis D. Stutzman.

Slagell, Irene Barbara, 78, Crystal Springs, Kan. Born: March 22, 1918, Crystal Springs, Kan., to Christian P. and Barbara Swartzendruber Slagell. Died: Oct. 20, 1996, LaJunta, Colo. Survivor—sister: Bernice Miller. Congregational membership: Emmanuel Mennonite Church. Funeral and burial: Oct. 23, Fairview Cemetery, by Merritt Welty.

Watson, Ann Elisabeth, 72, Telford, Pa. Born: May 2, 1924, Marnheim, Germany. Died: Oct. 29, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Funeral: Oct. 31, Souderton Mennonite Church, by Gerald Clemmer and David Greiser. Burial: Perkiomenville Mennonite Cemetery.

(continued from page 9)

INDIA 1997

Brethren in Christ:
GROWING IN AND BEYOND COMMUNITIES

In 1914 the Brethren in Christ established its first mission in India, about 250 kilometers north of Calcutta. Saharsa, the government seat for the area, soon became the headquarters for the Brethren in Christ. For the first 40 years, missionaries concentrated their work in three mission stations: Saharsa, Madhipura, and Supaul. Barjora eventually replaced Supaul, which was ravaged by the erratic Kosi River.

The primary effort of the early years was focused in service ministries, since direct evangelism among the staunchly Hindu and Muslim population was virtually fruitless. Orphanages, schools, hostels, dispensaries, and a hospital in Madhipura were established. Land was purchased for a farm at Barjora in response to a famine.

The work in Saharsa District was almost entirely among Hindi-speaking people. The church grew slowly through its service ministries on the three major compounds; hence, Brethren in Christ Christians were clustered in communities.

By 1950, the missionaries began to focus on tribal groups living in the Purnea district. In spite of persecution, growth was substantial enough to enable new Christians to live in their own villages.

An intentional transition from mission to church took place between 1965 and 1974. The mission superintendent no longer chaired church councils or the executive board. The church was registered as a legal entity in the capital of Bihar, and real estate was transferred to the church. Institutions came to be managed by nationals, and all overseas missionaries had returned to Canada or the United States by 1978.

—Harvey R. Sider

Newspaper

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God doesn't carry a Daytimer

At least not that I'm aware of. But there are days I certainly wish God did. One of my most difficult tasks as a disciple of Jesus is synchronizing my schedule with God's. So often I find myself waiting and waiting, then petitioning and petitioning, and finally waiting and waiting again for God to act.

I'm discovering that I have lots of company, especially in Scripture. "Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices," the psalmist instructs me (Ps. 37:7). The prophet Hosea says: "Return to your God, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God" (Hosea 12:6).

Perhaps no one knew the need to wait better than Abraham. Consider what happened to him in Genesis 15—a good example of what he experienced most of his life. God told Abraham to prepare a sacrifice. Then nothing happened. Abraham waited so long that the sacrifice got smelly and he had to shoo the buzzards away. Still nothing. Finally, at dark, Abraham went to sleep, terrified that God had forgotten him. It was in that sleep that God came, with a blessing and a promise: a peaceful old age and many descendants.

The next step for Abraham was to wait—again. This time he got impatient. It seemed only a miracle would fulfill God's promise of a son, since his wife was past childbearing age. So Abraham acted on his own and impregnated his slave girl. As a result, in having to deal with Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21), Abraham surely put in jeopardy God's other promise: a peaceful old age.

There was a time, however, when Abraham did move swiftly—and apparently with God's blessing. In Genesis 14, he learned that his nephew Lot had been captured during a battle in the Valley of Siddim. Without hesitation, Abraham rounded up the troops and mounted a pursuit, successfully bringing Lot and his family back home.

The Bible doesn't say this action came as a directive from God. But it apparently had God's blessing. When he returned from the hunt, Abraham was met by one of God's priests, Melchizedek, who blessed him in the name of God for his actions.

What's the difference? Why was Abraham told to wait so many times for the fulfillment of God's promise? Yet in this one incident, at least, he was blessed for taking quick action.

Now one must be careful not to read too much into the Bible. But I find it helpful to note that when Abraham was blessed for taking action, his move was on behalf of others. When he was told to wait, what he waited for was related to his own needs and desires.

How unlike the way I operate! I find myself quick to tell others to wait for God, to be patient, to give things time to work themselves out. Yet when I'm in need of guidance, when I have a decision to make, or when I simply want to know more of God's voice and way, I want it *now*. The sooner, the better.

Waiting for ourselves—moving for others. Was that not the way Jesus lived his life here on earth? Take the time the Pharisees caught his disciples shucking grain on the sabbath. Jesus quickly came to their defense: "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath," he said (Mark 2:27, NRSV). But when urged to defend himself at his own trial, to give an account of why he acted the way he did, Jesus fell silent and simply waited for events to unfold (Matt. 27:14).

Apparently it's all in the timing, God's timing. Writing in 1943, Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it this way: "The main thing is that we keep step with God and do not keep pressing on a few steps ahead—nor dawdling a step behind."

How do we know when to do which? If we take the life of Abraham as an example, as well as the way Jesus operated, we can know that difference by analyzing for whom an action is intended. When for others, move. When for ourselves, wait.

I find that a hard lesson, one for which I get little help from a Daytimer. But it's a lesson toward which the psalmist continually pushes me. "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14).—*jlp*

November 26, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Holy moments with high schoolers:

'Did we get it right, Dorothy?'

On a Maundy Thursday, before a hall packed with people ready to observe the Lord's Supper, 11 teens tell of the journey that has brought them to baptism.

by Dorothy Nickel Friesen

'Do you, Kendra, Steve, Leah, Dan, Andy, Laura, Jesse, Karim, Jenny, Mike, and Kari, promise to renounce sin and follow Jesus Christ?"

My voice that spoke these words and my presence at the microphone in front of 450 silent parishioners felt oddly mystical. Did these high school students really just say, "I do"? Did these babes in the faith promise in front of God and in front of these adults to live a holy life?

Well, maybe it was true.

Easter 1996 at First Mennonite Church was a holy day. Actually, there were holy moments all along the way with these teenagers. It began last fall when a large group of high school teenagers lounged in our home, and I explained, as their new pastor, a vision for considering church membership. It would involve four to six "experiential" sessions in the fall for any who wanted to attend. They would interview experienced Christians in the church. They would view the movie, *The Radicals*, and dis-

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Barbara Esch Shisler:
Gathering around the 'disabled God' 2

Evangeline King:
Learning to respond to all kinds of disasters 6

'Mennobytes' by Jason Kuniholm:
Letting the whole field grow with patience 8

Merging of general boards should be priority, says MCGB 9

I took the paper, looked at its author, handed the paper back to him without reading it, and silently mouthed, "It's fine." He grinned and looked relieved.

cuss faith and martyrdom. They would visit Menno Hof in northern Indiana and experience the history and life of the Mennonites. Later, they would play a simulation game, Persecution, in the darkness of our small town's neighborhoods.

Almost all of the 30 in the youth group attended the sessions, rearranging work schedules and delaying their socializing a bit. They were polite, cautious, but very much engaged.

Then came Lent. I issued the invitation: "If you want to seriously think about baptism and becoming a member of First Mennonite Church, you must attend six sessions on Sunday morning. Then you will decide if you will be baptized on Easter."

Fourteen made the pledge. We crowded into the conference room, and I began intense teaching sessions on baptism, communion, Bible, church history, peace, and finally on speaking one's faith. They shared more than they knew.

We began each session with a check-in time. I asked about the spiritual discipline of the week and what they had learned about meditation, singing hymns, praying, money, and Bible reading. Some would pull out their homework sheets and check their notes. Others would squirm because they hadn't really forgotten but just hadn't gotten around to it. (Actually, they were ready to be church members, because I hear that same thing from much older and seasoned members!)

One week I asked them to set a timer for 10 minutes in their private place of prayer. "Pray for 10 minutes, no less. Use an ACTS formula like this: A = adoration (give God praise); C = confession (confess sins); T = thanksgiving (give thanks); and S = supplication (pray for others)."

Gathering around the 'disabled

by Barbara Esch Shisler

Communion is announced for the next meeting. A visible, joyful ripple moves around the circle. No one in this church is blasé about communion.

Communion for this congregation is unique. Here the majority of worshipers are disabled in some way. People with wheelchairs and walkers find their places. People who talk oddly or talk at the wrong time or don't talk at all bring their language to the table. We are serving the body broken for us all. What more appropriate place for broken bodies to gather than around the "disabled God"? *(The Disabled God,* Nancy Eiesland, Abingdon, 1994).

Christ was disabled on our behalf: for those of us who experience pain and rejection and for those of us who are temporarily "abled" but who will at some time identify with a disabled God.

John spills his grape juice on the communion cloth. Now we will remember John. Bob picks up a stray guitar and does an impromptu song while the bread is being served. Now we are aware of Bob. Judy has a seizure and leans across her neighbor's lap until it passes. Now we care for Judy. Whatever is happening here is happening in the presence and protection of love. It is all blessed.

If Sunday morning congregations came together for communion in this spirit, what unifying and joyful times they would have. No cynicism or doubt. No boredom. No concerns that my brother or sister is doing something that is unacceptable to me.

We are one body formed through the broken body, made up of many parts. How tenderly we respond to the vulnerable part; how respectful we are of what is at risk of being cast aside. When my disabled sister's gift of friendship is ignored, I am as wounded as she. If my brother makes an unexpected sound, I receive that sound as

A senior volunteered that she thought praying for 10 minutes was a pretty long time. But by the second day, she said, "It wasn't enough time. I couldn't possibly pray for only 10 minutes. I needed to pray more."

It took my breath away. It was a holy moment.

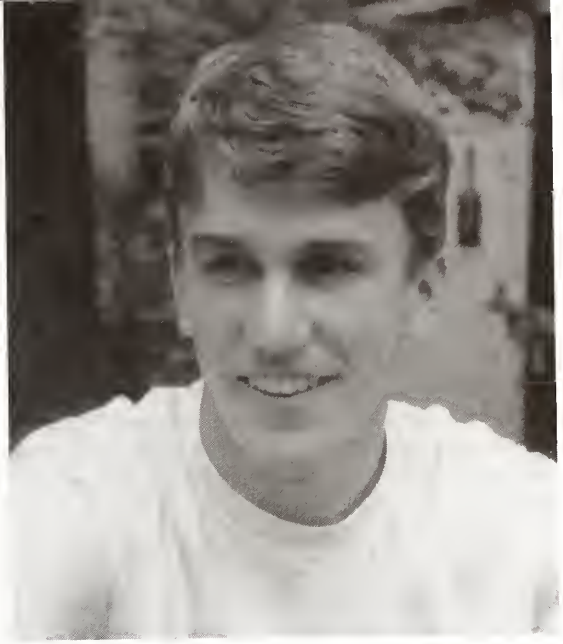
Then, after the six weeks, it was time for decision. Was this the right time for baptism and church membership? In true Anabaptist style, each of the 14 pondered her or his own response.

Some delayed and asked for more time. "Dorothy, the more I learn, the more I don't think I'm ready. Can I wait?" one young woman asked me.

The gut-wrenching honesty was apparent, her will to make a good decision obvious.

"Sure," I said. "Do you think I am ready for baptism?"

The startled look meant that I had her attention. "Seriously," I said, "do you think pastors have all the answers?"



That began a good discussion in the church's lobby one day, when she came to tell me that this Easter was just too soon for her public commitment.

On Maundy Thursday, before a packed fellowship hall of people seated around tables and ready to observe the Lord's Supper, each of the 11 who decided to be baptized spoke of their faith.

Actually, only 10. One had a minor car accident just hours before the service. He appeared at the church, not injured but slightly shaken and emotionally drained. He couldn't possibly speak in front of a crowd. I invited him to sit with the rest of his friends who gathered like mother hens around him, hugging him. Tears flowed. He was safe!

Each one nervously and self-consciously sat with prepared notes in hand. One teenager had his notes typed and double-spaced. Just before the service, as the prelude was playing, he pushed his "speech" across the table to me and silently mouthed, "Is it okay?"

I took the paper, looked at him, handed the paper back without reading it, and silently mouthed back, "It's fine." He grinned and looked relieved.

One by one, they came to the microphone.

"I am ready to be baptized because I have given God control of my life," said one.

Another explained that a song told exactly her testimony. Easily, she sang her faith.

A tall, rather likeable young man, shifted from foot to foot as he told of picking up a hitchhiker, Curly Bob. He had lived out his faith by extending friendship and a few dollars to a homeless drifter. "I actually acted on my faith," he said.

"My mother and my grandmother have

(continued on page 4)

God'

his personal expression—a time for recognition and not for rejection.

The resurrection of Jesus gives us hope. He carries his disablement visible to us still, but the marks reveal a truth. God embodies impairment, and by recognizing that reality, we connect with God. We understand that wholeness is fully possible in a disabled body.

Shirley picks up a bit of bread that fell to the floor. She looks at it knowingly, then pops it into her mouth. The word made flesh dwells among us. And we behold and marvel at grace and truth.

Barbara Esch Shisler, pastor at Indian Creek Foundation, Harleysville, Pa., and at Perkasie Mennonite Church, wrote this article about a Faith and Light meeting. Faith and Light is a network of 1,300 communities around the world that bring together people with developmental disabilities and their families and friends for worship, celebration, and sharing.

"When I was a kid, I didn't like that I couldn't share the bread and the juice. I didn't understand anything. Now I have a better idea of why this is so important."

(continued from page 3)

been a big influence on my life," said a thoughtful senior.

"It was at camp, year after year, that my faith grew," said another.

With a quiet voice, a young junior said that she, too, wanted to express her faith by performing a piano solo. We listened as the strains of "Seek Ye First" and Pachebel's "Canon in D" flowed together.

"When I go to college next year, I want to feel a part of you. This congregation has stood by me and has shown me what tolerance and faith are. I want to be a part of you."

"When I was a kid," said another, "I got really bored with the long, dry, uninteresting services. I didn't like being dragged here, and I really didn't like that I couldn't eat the bread and the juice. I didn't understand anything. But now I have a better idea of why sharing the bread and the juice is so important. I want to share it with you."

It was a holy time.

In three days, the sun shone, mostly, on that Easter morn. Several of the about-to-be-baptized appeared in the subfreezing outdoor setting to sing "Allelu, allelu, everybody sing, allelu!" This was the day.

During the service, I felt love for these 11 in the deepest part of my being. I cared for them and had learned to "call them by name"—a phrase from John 10 which served as the sermon Scripture.

This service was a highlight in the life of the church. We knelt, baptized, and prayed. After many congratulatory hugs from the worshipers following the service, the group again gathered in the sanctuary for the mandatory photo. Amidst the joking and jockeying for position around the pitcher, towel, and basin, I asked Curly Bob's friend if he minded all the water running down his face.

"You see," I said, "I believe that you should really feel that water."

He just grinned. "It was great! Is there any water left? Pour it all on me!"

Not to be outdone, another said, "Sounds just like Peter wanting to get washed all over. Did I get it right, Dorothy? It was Peter, wasn't it?"

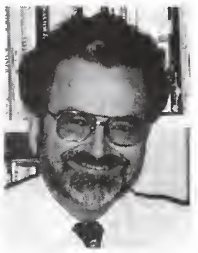
You got it right, brother.

Actually, you all got it right.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen is pastor of First Mennonite Church in Bluffton, Ohio. She also serves as cochair of the GC-MC Integration Committee.

***I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me.*—Matt. 25:35-36a**

Gospel Herald



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Replacing "Did You Win?" with "How Did You Play?" (Nov. 5). No amount of pious apologetics can change the worldly, anti-gospel nature of professional sports. Praying for victory in the locker room is just as hypocritical—and as ineffective—as praying for victory in the war room.

I say: eliminate all competitive athletic programs from Mennonite schools. Replace them with defenseless, lose-your-life-to-find-it ethics training for our young people—in imitation of our team manager from Nazareth.

Charlie Kraybill
Staten Island, N.Y.

Thanks for Ron Helmuth's excellent piece, ***What's the Real Issue with TV and Computers?*** and for Marilyn Kennel's insightful ***Quit Being So Nice*** (Oct. 15). Wise words on two matters most of us struggle with daily. I want to pass these on, with your permission, to members of our congregation here in Taipei.

Nate Showalter
Taipei International Church
Taipei, Taiwan

My Business is Your Business (Oct. 29). A hearty "amen" to Calvin Redekop for pointing out the ways in which we Mennonites have unquestioningly accepted the individualism of our culture in economic affairs. While individualism pervades other aspects of our lives as well, the church's silence on economics is noteworthy and belies Jesus' attention to such matters. I know, from working with congregations in conflict, that if you want to know where a church has problems, pay attention to what they don't talk about. Ethicist Stanley Hauerwas has suggested that before becoming members of a local congregation, we ought to have to face the church and say in public how much money we make. I don't imagine that would help with church growth goals or be welcomed by those who would like to see Mennonites "buy into big" (***Pastors of Large Churches Talk About Implications of Size,*** Oct. 8). But it might help bring about the kind of mutual accountability and discipleship that Redekop admonishes.

Before we too quickly and simply blame the individualism that is "out there" for our economic disobedience, let's not forget what Max Weber observed long ago—that Christianity led the way morally and structurally in the development of capitalism. Within the existing structures, we have become sophisticated in the ways of "stewardship," able to justify nearly any lifestyle, behavior, or practice. But we are seldom even required to do that much, and, when we do, the refrain, "It's one's attitude that matters," is most often heard.

It's as if Jesus had said, "For where your heart is, there your treasure will be also" (Matt. 6:21). This means that we may need some new wineskins (Luke 5:37-38) before the congregation can become the center of economic life as Redekop envisions.

A seminary professor of mine once told of a visit to an ornate European cathedral. He turned to one of his hosts and observed, "Wow, how's this for contextualizing the gospel?" To which his host replied, "The question is whether it's the gospel that's being contextualized."

We might be wise to ask a similar question about our economic life choices as followers of Jesus. Redekop points us down that road.

Larry Dunn
Syracuse, N.Y.

James E. Brenneman's article, ***From Flaccid Whiners to Authentic Witnesses*** (Oct. 22) shows the way—and reminds us why Jesus said that way is narrow and there are few who find it. It seems that Christians in America don't really want to find this way, which calls them to risk suffering as a consequence of challenging oppressing powers of religion, economics, and government.

No theology of atonement makes sense which cannot make sense of Jesus words, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34).

What is this: "We have a cross just as Jesus had a cross? But wasn't he dying so that we wouldn't have to die?" So goes the popular, cushy-cross atonement theory which places an unbridgeable divide between Jesus and us—a divide where Jesus was placing an inescapable connection between himself and us, his cross and ours.

We don't find ourselves standing before the court like the solitary figure (as illustrated on page 3) because we go along with, rather than resist, the religious oppression of homosexuals, the economic exploitation of the poor, and the political legalization of homicide by war—to touch lightly a few notable examples of the witness we avoid. The church would be a lot more interesting to the world if it were a bit more different from it in things that matter.

John Stoner
Akron, Pa.

Congratulations on your November 12 issue. The first three articles were written by an Indonesian, a South African, and a North American. You'll have a tough time topping this internationally broad, intellectually stimulating, and spiritually challenging issue. But I hope you try!

Randall J. Roth
Des Moines, Iowa

Gospel Herald *welcomes your letters, either about our contents or about issues currently facing the Mennonite church. Please keep letters brief and to one point. Address: "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail: GHerald%mph@mcimail.com*

Pontius' Puddle

Learning to respond to all kind

People knew how to respond when we were struck by a tornado. They accepted our feelings of helplessness and fear. Not so when my disaster was 'unnatural.'

by Evangeline King

When a tornado touched down on our property the night of July 28, 1994, we were traumatized and in shock. Glass, insulation, and bits of wood littered my son's room. Branches, leaves, and nuts lay everywhere.

The support of neighbors, friends, and family brought us through that time. A tree-trimming service, a contractor, family, and several church members came to look and to help. A neighbor took me to a doctor's appointment. One church family provided drinking water. Two families brought supper. Our church family organized a work party. The support, love, and comfort sustained us through the recovery process necessary after such a trauma.

At four years of age, I experienced a different trauma—an adult male friend of our family sexually molested me. I was terrified, and in my mind, I left my body to escape. My abuser turned back to his work, leaving me bloody and so sore that I could hardly sit.

When I saw my perpetrator again, questions raced through my head. Did he do that to his daughter, his son, or other little girls? Did it hurt them as it had me? Did his wife know? I had never heard anyone talk about similar things. I felt awful, but I didn't want anyone to know what had happened.

So I hid my pain and confusion, and it was 40 years before I told a counselor. That abuse had traumatized me at my core. My abuser left me vulnerable to the next male with similar intentions. He confused issues of trust, shame, boundaries, and self-worth. I again felt alone and different.

I continue to work through the long-term effects of his actions. My husband has also become a victim of them. Since I have begun to heal, people have told me many things: I'm torturing myself with memories, I talk about it too much, I should just forget it and go on from here, I must be careful not to ruin my perpetrator's life, I shouldn't be angry, forgiveness is the Christian's duty.

People responded much differently to the destruction the tornado caused to our house. The feeling that others cared, that they were shocked, and that they accepted our feelings of injustice, helplessness, and fear helped us sort through the confusion and loss. We diminished the pain by talking about it. The way to recover from trauma is to be heard, loved, and comforted.

Such luxury is not yet afforded victims of abuse. Abuse may be difficult to detect and to believe, especially within the church. Frequently survivors blame themselves and remain silent. It is hard to reveal such intimate things. Children believe that adults are perfect and therefore whatever adults do to children must be deserved and normal. They need the adults in their lives and cannot risk estrangement.

As a church, we take pride in the work of our disaster and relief agencies, and we should. Following Christ has taught us how to help those who suffer from natural disasters; I yearn for us to develop similar expertise with these "unnatural" disasters.

What could have helped my four-year-old self? What do survivors of abuse need from family and church?

Awareness. When it happened, I needed someone to be aware that something had happened to me, someone to draw the secret from its hiding place. Years later, one woman did notice my pain as we met each other after church. We held hands and studied faces, and although no words were spoken, I felt her concern for me.

Today I need people who have some idea of the trauma I experienced and its effects. How can we learn these things? We can walk beside people as they heal. We can read books about abuse and attend seminars in which therapists teach about abuse, its signs, its complications, and its healing.

Safety and confidentiality. When I was four, I needed someone to listen without judgment. I sensed that my father would be very angry at me. I didn't want anyone to know how "bad" I was. Today I need those who can help my perpetrator take responsibility for his actions. I need to have my pain acknowledged unconditionally. I need to know that others are not perfect and struggle with intimate problems. I need a person, a family, a small group, and a congregation in which it is safe to

# of disasters

disclose. Sharing also makes us vulnerable, and survivors need to have their stories kept confidential if they wish.

An empathetic ear. At the time I was molested, I needed to talk about the incident in its entirety. I needed to share my confusion, pain, and questions. I continue to need someone to listen, understand, care, and comfort. I need to retell my story until I find the words that truly express what happened and its effects. I need to repeat my story until it becomes small enough emotionally to tuck it away in my mind.

Support. At four years of age, I needed to be held, comforted, and examined. I needed to know that I wasn't bad and that I was loveable and valuable. Today I need to understand that my reactions were normal. I need to be exonerated of wrongdoing. I need others who have experienced sexual abuse who can help me find my way through the jungle of emotions and faulty coping skills I have learned.

One congregation subsidized a Christian therapist who conducted a support group for survivors of sexual abuse. That helped me. We also can offer our buildings as places for support groups to meet.

Monetary help with counseling. When I was a child, counselors didn't deal much with abuse. Now counselors are trained to respond to all types of abuse. Such counseling is expensive and has drained our finances at times, even with the help of insurance reimbursements. Counseling may continue for years, and hospitalization or drug therapy may be needed. This can consume the lifetime psychological limits that insurance companies carry. Some victims have been so traumatized that they cannot hold a job or only have a part-time job with no benefits. Churches can reduce the stress by helping to meet financial needs.

Trusting the process. Many years have passed since I was abused. More have passed since I began to heal. I have felt powerless to change and am often impatient with my progress. Friends, family, and members of my congregation have shown different levels of patience. Healing is a process that takes much time. There is a drive to wholeness within us. It will proceed at its own speed; we all need to relax and let it unfold.

Looking at all sides. We may suspect persons of abuse because of obvious brokenness; on the other hand, abusers may be respected pillars in a congregation. It may be hard to believe their secret sides. This is complicated with the standard defense mechanisms of denying, justifying, or minimizing actions. Many abusers have themselves been abused. We need to be careful to not judge the effects of abuse without considering the situation that produced them.

How do we love, respect, and bring to wholeness both perpetrators and their victims? How can we determine that an abuser is penitent and rehabilitated? Is restitution needed, and if so, how can we help a survivor through the process of forgiveness? Is it healthy for a survivor to trust an abuser? What kind of relationship can these groups have within the congregation? These are knotty problems we as a church need to face.

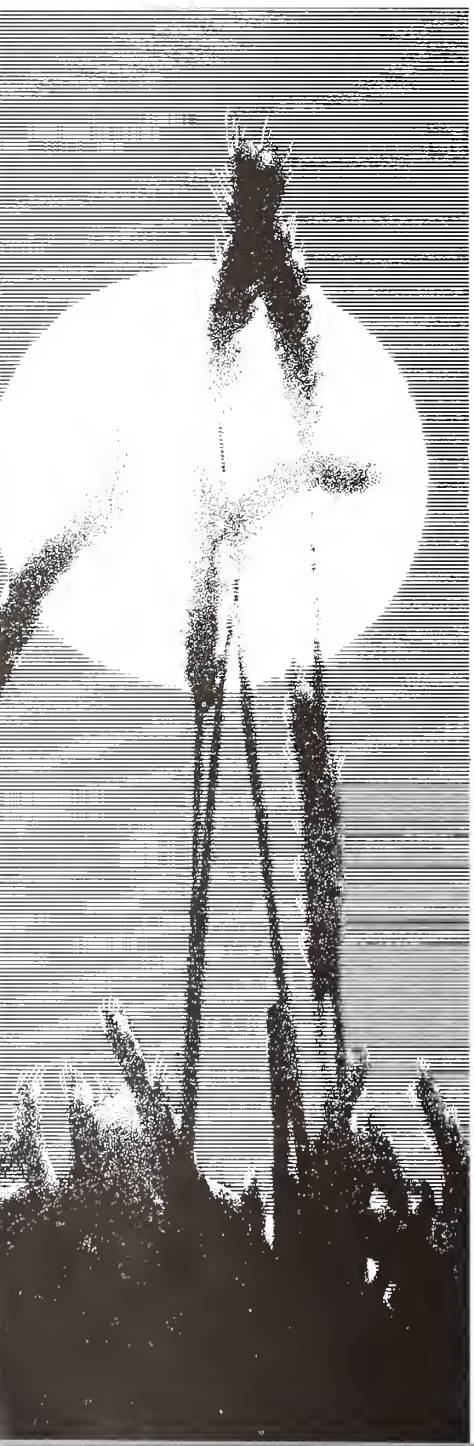
Through conferences about domestic violence, many of us have opened our eyes and witnessed the devastation abuse can bring. Now we must find ways to bring God's love to wounded people. We need to sacrifice the time to listen and become instruments of emotional healing. We must treat these "unnatural" disasters with the same caring and comfort that we offer to survivors of natural disasters.

Evangeline King and her husband are the parents of three adult children. While she prefers that no other details about her be published with this article, she is willing to dialogue with anyone interested about her experience. Send letters to Gospel Herald, *616 Walnut Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683.*

Letting the whole field grow with patience

Jesus' story of the wheat and tares tells us what is most important in the kingdom: patience over judgment, reconciliation over purity, forgiveness over perfection.

by Jason Kuniholm



Christianity has an abysmal track record of separating wheat from tares. This makes perfect sense, since Jesus told his followers that they do not have the skills to accurately and effectively judge properly on all issues. Unfortunately, this clear injunction from Christ has not deterred the zealous desire of some in the church to practice a skill they do not possess.

A quick glance through church history will elicit a mixture of pain and even laughter. Anabaptists were seen as tares when the movement began, hippies were seen as tares at one time, and certain groups of people in the church today are feeling the tug of well-intentioned tare pullers. Consequently, tender faith is uprooted in the name of purity, no matter how well intentioned.

If you happened to be the object of any of this tare pulling in the past, you know firsthand the struggle to reclaim your faith in Christ. If you happen to be this generation's designated tare, you know the struggle to maintain faith in the God of love when you feel the grip of a tare puller on your faith.

More and more churches are choosing to cut off from other churches in the name of love. I am getting nervous as the practice of disfellowship is being dusted off in the name of purity. I affirm and value the *view* that each church comes to on a handful of "tare issues," but I cannot affirm the *response* some churches are making. I believe the choice for cut off and judgment is not biblical—and therefore not Christlike. There is another way for churches to frame responses when cutoff and a choice for judgment seem like the only options.

This different response is based on the parable of the wheat and tares—a story of grace tucked in the middle of Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). When it comes to homosexuality, military involvement, or any number of controversial issues, the focus of this parable is helpful. Our primary goal is to be cleansed, not to do the cleansing. In this story, Christ calls us to spend our time becoming good wheat, not becoming good tare pullers.

The central theme of the story is the importance of being patient and humble. Focusing on becoming good wheat and letting God work does not mean we should have a laissez-faire attitude about important issues. The critical point is our response. Every generation of the church faces issues that cry out for humility. People who are committed to Christ, value Scripture, seek God's presence and guidance, and have a growing faith will come out with different conclusions. Living with these different opinions demands more patience than cut offs and judgment.

This parable of grace does say that when we become hyperanxious over making others pure, we should "let it go, for in the process you may destroy tender faith in God with your judgment" (Matt. 13:29). Christ says that we do not have the skills to judge, and if we pull tares in the name of keeping the church pure, we will destroy some tender faith. To choose judgment and disfellowship over one or two issues is a present-day example of this truth: such tare pulling weakens rather than strengthens God's kingdom on earth.

Purity and making ethical choices in family and work life are important. However, I believe this story of the wheat and the tares tells us what is most important: patience over judgment, reconciliation over purity, and forgiveness over perfection. These redefined priorities will introduce a new surge of energy into the church—energy that is being wasted in doing something that Christ says is not our task. For

(continued on page 15)

MCGB sets merger with its GC counterpart as first priority for a new integrated church

Chicago, Ill.—The first step toward integration of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church should be merging their two general boards.

That was the decision of the Mennonite Church General Board meeting here, Nov. 13-15. MCGB told the Integration Committee that bringing the two general boards together should be its first priority.

The MCGB decision came after more than three and one-half hours of discussion about how integration should take place and what structures the new denomination should have. Almost half of this discussion was with members of the General Conference General Board (GCGB), meeting at the same time at the same location.

Though discussions were joint, decisions were separate. Unaware of the MCGB move, the GCGB approved a plan to have the executive committees of each group attend the next board meetings of the other group. Through the two and one-half days of meetings, members of both boards occasionally expressed frustration with not being able to make integration decisions together at this meeting.

Though not part of the MCGB official action, the board agreed that merger of the two general boards should come as early as 1999 but no later than 2001.

"From somewhere the idea has come that when the general boards are merged, then our denominations will be integrated," MCGB moderator Owen Burkholder told a conjoint session of the two boards.

Though the final decision of the MCGB was about the board itself, most of the discussion of integration at this meeting centered on a proposal brought by the Integration Committee to structure the new denomination around regional centers. These centers, likely four or more in number, would provide for much of the administration and programming of the new church.

"But where would the denominational office be?" asked moderator Burkholder. "Where would the 'titular head' be located?"

Dale Martin from Franklin Conference asked what kind of staffing regional centers would require. "This feels like more structure," Martin said. "I thought integration was not to create more but to have less."

"And will competition develop between these centers," asked Robert Zehr of Gulf States Conference, "particularly if the denominational head is located at one of them?"

Both boards, however, gave preliminary nods to some kind of decentralized structure and directed the Integration Committee to keep working on the idea.

"We need to recognize that a new denomination with a poor structure and a healthy soul will accomplish more than one with a good structure but a poor soul," said John Murray, MC cochair of the Integration Committee, following a lengthy discussion of structure.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, GC cochair of the Integration Committee, reminded the boards that whatever the design of the structure, "it will probably be good for only 20 years—which can be kind of discouraging," Friesen said.

In a worship session prior to a joint discussion of integration, Friesen used the parable of the talents from Matthew 25 and asked: "Could it be that the one talent we have been given is the call to merge our two small denominations on the face of this planet?"

"If so," she continued, "our questions are: 'How shall we invest this talent? How shall we see it multiply?'

"The risk in this parable is the public expression of the gospel. Integration for us may be a modern-day call to be risk-takers and investors," Friesen said.

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

John Murray (left), Topeka, Ind., and Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Bluffton, Ohio, serve as cochairs of the Integration Committee. Here they address a conjoint session of the Mennonite Church General Board and the General Conference Mennonite Church General Board, meeting in Chicago, Ill., Nov. 13-15.

What's in a name?

Chicago, Ill.—"If I would have anything to say about integration, it's that we're going to have to get some passion into this thing," said Howard Brenneman, president of Mennonite Mutual Aid, during an indepth review of MMA by the Mennonite Church General Board (MCGB) at its meeting here, Nov. 13-15.

General Board members apparently took him seriously in their discussion of a name for the new integrated denomination. Discussion was animated and intense, finally resulting in a straw vote on several suggestions.

The Integration Committee had previously proposed *Mennonite Church North America* for the name. Cochair John Murray told the MCGB his committee had received numerous reactions. "While we're not completely withdrawing this name," Murray said, "we do recognize that a name which reflects geography may not be the best choice."

The Integration Committee has other suggestions. MCGB took a straw vote on how well they liked these:
Mennonite Church North America: 0
Conference of Mennonite Churches: 0
United Mennonite Conference: 1
Mennonite Church General Conference: 8

The majority, however, went for a name suggested from the floor—*Mennonite Church*: 14. "It's not hard to figure out which general board this is," Owen Burkholder quipped.

In their separate session, the General Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church said its preference for name is *Mennonite Church General Conference.*

General Board cuts funding to other groups in response to fewer conference contributions

Chicago, Ill.—At the same time they talked about structures for a new denomination (see story on page 9), members of the Mennonite Church General Board (MCGB), meeting here, Nov. 13-15, struggled with ways to keep current work going until merger happens.

MCGB members faced sobering statistics in a report from their finance committee. With three months remaining in the current fiscal year, contributions to MCGB from area conferences are down 12 percent. Out of 21 supporting conferences, all but three are behind in projected contributions. As a result, General Board has money for slightly more than three-fourths of its 1996 budget.

"Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference just had its worst quarter ever," Duane Oswald, PSMC's moderator, told the board. "And we can trace our deficit back to what is happening in individual congregations."

H. James Smith, representative from Illinois Conference, said: "Because of some of the issues we're dealing with, congregations are not supporting the conference. This gets reflected in how we give to the General Board. One of the ways people have of indicating their support is through their finances."

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Faced with this downturn in contributions, MCGB adopted a budget for 1997 that freezes spending at this year's level. To make this possible, the board agreed to eliminate these groups from its budget:

- Mennonite World Conference,
- Christian Peacemaker Teams,
- New Call to Peacemaking,
- Ecumenical Center for Stewardship Studies.

"We've eliminated contributions to some organizations that do peace activities," explained Miriam Martin, Atlantic Coast representative. "Our rationale is that we want to do more to support our own Peace and Justice Committee." PJC retains a $2,500 line item in the new budget.

The board also agreed to limit salary increases for its staff to a 2.8 percent cost of living adjustment. It also asked staff to cut $4,000 in travel and promotion.

"I feel a double bind developing," said General Secretary George Stoltzfus. "We need to think about cutting travel and promotion at the same time that we are being asked to be more visible in the church." Stoltzfus referred to a previous discussion that called for more promotion of general board work to conference and congregations.

Even with a spending freeze at $629,128, MCGB's 1997 budget calls for $30,000 to be raised from "friends of the board" and staff contributions.

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"How we fund this budget speaks to what the General Board is," Martin said. "If we are an association of conferences, then our funds need to be raised from the conferences. If we are an institution, then we can go to individuals for our money. But, frankly, I'm not completely comfortable with this."

Finances also became the issue as the MCGB attempted to deal with racial / ethnic relations. Past moderator Donella Clemens reminded the board that in 1995 it had agreed to become an advocate for the different racial and ethnic groups in the church, particularly for some who felt they were losing their voice in the integration process.

In response, the board strongly recommended that its staff and several of its members be trained by Mennonite Central Committee U.S.'s Damascus Road Project—nine days of sensitivity training in racial relations.

Hearing that applications are up but funding down to the Racial / Ethnic Leadership Education Fund (RELE), the board agreed to make a special appeal for contributions to this fund in connection with the next Mennonite General Assembly, scheduled for this summer in Orlando, Fla. Either the registration form will include a line for contributions to RELE, or some of the offerings will be used in this way. Several MCGB members pointed out, however, that an Orlando 97 budget they had approved previously might need as much as $60,000 from offerings at the Assembly.

In other business, MCGB members:

- responded favorably to plans for The Giving Project, a plan for increased stewardship education and reflection in both the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church;
- agreed that future convention planning should be done by a committee of the General Board. This includes planning for both adult and youth conventions. The latter previously had been planned by the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries.
- reviewed a proposed statement on violence and agreed to pass it on to congregations and conferences for discussion.

This fall's meeting of the Mennonite Church General Board was the first for Marcia Troupe, Elkhart, Ind., (left), who came to the General Board staff in August as administrative assistant. Here Troupe joins Shelley Buller, administrative assistant for the General Conference General Board, Newton, Kan., in a song during an installation service for the two new general secretaries of both boards: George Stoltzfus for the MCGB and James Schrag for the GCGB.

- conducted an indepth review of the work of Mennonite Mutual Aid.

MCGB welcomed three new members to this fall's session: Ramón Bermúdez from the Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference; Conrado Hinojosa, representing the Hispanic Mennonite Convention; and H. James Smith from the Illinois Mennonite Conference.

—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Garbage in, gardens out:
Recycling effort grows

Hévié, Benin (MBM)—Surrounded by sandy plains near the West African coastal city of Cotonou, a lush garden blooms. It is nurtured by the refuse of a major urban center and the support of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) worker Lynda Hollinger-Janzen.

As papaya trees rustle in the gentle breeze from the coast, workers dip their watering cans into 14 ponds filled by the nearby Toho River. Under the hot sun, they drench the plants and vegetables, including cucumbers, eggplants, beans, carrots, and tomatoes.

"If you come here early in the morning when everything is fresh in dew, it seems like the Garden of Eden," says Raphael Edou, a Beninese-educated agriculturist who has served as director of the project since July 1993.

This Eden was born not out of an attempt to add to Benin's natural beauty. Instead, it developed as Lynda Hollinger-Janzen and others worked with Christian churches in Cotonou and the Bethesda Health Center. They sought to improve community health in a neighborhood of 40,000 people surrounding the health center.

A mound of shoes waits for recycling at the garbage-collection project in Hévié.

"We were trying to deal with the mosquitoes to prevent the transmission of disease as people dumped garbage into swamps to build up land around Cotonou," says Hollinger-Janzen, an MBM worker since 1987. "My training is in community mobilization. All this garbage and composting I learned along the way."

For about five cents per family per month, workers removed more than 18,200 cubic meters of household garbage from nearly 1,600 courtyards in the first year of garbage collection beginning in October 1994. Today, the project handles 400-500 cubic meters of trash per month. The project has created more than 100 permanent jobs and about 200 temporary jobs. Edou's goal is to expand Bethesda's model throughout Benin and into other West African countries.

"We are today where we had hoped to be in 10 years," Hollinger-Janzen says. "We never cease to marvel at the miracles."

"All of the earth is the Lord's," Hollinger-Janzen says, explaining how her faith shapes the effort. "If we can tap into God's plan, we can help make the world a better place. . . . This is where the Lord led me, from Goshen [Ind.] to the garden."—*Tom Price*

There are eight steps in the process of removing garbage in the Beninese project with which MBM worker Lynda Hollinger-Janzen works:

1. Two dozen workers use 12 pushcarts to collect trash placed on the streets outside people's courtyards in the district of Cotonou.
2. The trash is brought to a central lot, where it is loaded into a truck owned by the garbage collection and recycling project.
3. After driving 28 kilometers (more than 17 miles) west to Hevie, a community of five tribal villages, the truck unloads the trash into large piles.
4. Workers use pitchforks to shovel the trash onto the first of two five-by-ten-foot screens, which are used to help separate the sand and soil from recyclable materials.
5. Recyclable materials are placed into two-foot wicker baskets, from which they are transported to eight large piles on the project's 16-acre site. Recyclable materials include metal, glass, shoes, bones, shells, plastics, batteries, toxic items, as well as organic matter.
6. Some recyclable materials are sold to industries and individuals.
7. Compost created at the project is taken by wheelbarrow to the garden and sold commercially. The project also raises pigs and other farm animals.
8. Gardeners use the compost as they plant crops to harvest and sell.

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Consultation on military and church membership finds issue also involves economics and education

Chicago, Ill.—"We wonder if some of us fear our evangelism will lead to loss of identity."

With that statement by a listening committee as a backdrop, more than 100 persons gathered here Nov. 15-16 for a consultation on military personnel and membership in the Mennonite church.

The two-day gathering followed meetings of the general boards of both the Mennonite Church (MC) and the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC). Attending the consultation were members of both boards, staff from peace committees and commissions, and representatives from GC districts and MC area conferences.

"We have chosen to relate to our neighbors rather than to withdraw from them," MC moderator Owen Burkholder said in opening the consultation. "Now we are discovering that we are being affected by these people."

Burkholder noted that in some places, particularly in the Newport News, Va., area of his conference, these new people come from military installations. "We have chosen to put this issue on the table rather than sweep it under the rug," Burkholder said.

The issue was on the table in the form of stories. Bishop Leslie Francisco III, pastor of Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va., told how his church has grown from 70 to 700 members. At least 60 of these are currently employed by the military, which has nine bases in the area surrounding Calvary.

"We've opened our arms to welcome these into our congregation because we understand why they are in the military," Francisco said. "They're not there because they're warmongers or want to fight. They're there for economic and educational reasons."

'Everyone must understand that we are going to preach and teach the words of Jesus about peace over and over.'
—Michael Chandler

Brent Foster, copastor of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Ill., told how, growing up in Peoria, Ill., he went into the military to save himself from the streets and from prison. "The military offered me the privilege of finishing high school and going to college," Foster said. "It gave me important lessons about life—that I could achieve something. And it was in the military that I met Jesus Christ."

"There have got to be alternatives," consultation participants told each other, as they heard that, particularly for the African-American community, the issue of participation in the military is often the only option for economic and educational opportunities. "Why can't the church fund these opportunities today as it did for Civilian Public Service men after World War II?" asked Erwin Stutzman, Mount Joy, Pa., chair of the listening committee.

That won't come without sacrifice. Ted Redding, Parnell, Iowa, said: "The ethnic groups among us are making much bigger sacrifices than traditional Mennonite groups have made. It's time for the more wealthy churches to make some sacrifices on this issue."

Steve Brown, a member of Calvary, told the consultation that Virginia Conference has taken the first step by setting up scholarship funds for military personnel who are reentering civilian life.

"But the greatest thing we have to give is our compassion, not our cash," said Michael Chandler, pastor of the Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church. Chandler said that if all Mennonites were to give all they have ("which will never happen"), it still would by no means equal the military budget.

"We must raise our voices together and tell our governments that we want their resources used in more constructive ways," Chandler said.

Chandler, a Vietnam War veteran who has since "repented of my involvement in the military and was forgiven," asked: "Can we accept into membership those who are actively involved in some sort of military pursuit?

"Because of the graciousness of God, I suspect the answer is yes," Chandler said. "But at the same time, everyone must understand that we are going to preach and teach the words of Jesus about peace over and over."

"It seems we have agreement that peace is important," the consultation's listening committee said in its final report. "We have not needed to convince each other of that. Rather, we have considered how to deal pastorally with those who find themselves in the military.

"At the same time, we wonder if Jesus would rebuke some of us for binding heavy burdens on others and not lifting a finger to help," the committee concluded.—*J. Lorne Peachey*

Setting the boundaries with humility and patience

Chicago, Ill.—The church must have boundaries, Lois Barrett, executive secretary of the Commission of Home Ministries for the General Conference Mennonite Church, told participants in the consultation on the military and church membership. Barrett led three Bible studies during the Nov. 15-16 discussion.

"Boundaries assume that the church is different from the world in some ways," Barrett said. "It is not possible to have a healthy organization without them." Boundaries help a church define who it is—without which outreach is lukewarm and halfhearted.

"But not all boundaries are biblical," Barrett continued. That was the issue for the Jerusalem Conference on circumcision (Acts 15). It is the issue for the Mennonite church today: "What are the boundaries for us at this time?"

Barrett listed three for Mennonites in North America today:

- putting Jesus at the center for salvation and discipleship;
- giving and receiving counsel in the community of faith;
- refusing to participate in the military.

How does the church decide what are its boundaries? (1) It agrees on what is faithfulness to the gospel. (2) It considers its setting and how it should be different from the dominant culture. (3) It determines its mission as a "contrast culture."

"Boundary issues are to be judged by whether they proclaim the reign of God," Barrett said.

Yet even with our boundaries, "we need to emphasize faith as a magnet rather than a fence," Barrett went on. We invite people in and help them move toward the center, toward God, to whom we give all our love and allegiance.

"At the same time we recognize that we are all at various stages of movement toward this center," Barrett said. We help each other along, with gentleness, humility, mercy, and patience. "This is the preferred method of discipline in the New Testament," Barrett concluded.

No* Gospel Herald *will be published Dec. 3 while we take a break from our normal weekly schedule. Our next issue will be dated Dec. 10.

- **MCC calls for blankets.** Mennonite Central Committee is appealing for 50,000 blankets by Christmas. The blankets will go to eastern Zaire, where more than one million people have fled camps and homes due to fighting between Zaire's military and Zairian Tutsi. Blankets can be delivered to any MCC office by Dec. 25, along with $3 (U.S.) per blanket for shipping costs.

- **Umble dies.** Roy H. Umble, 83, professor emeritus of communication at Goshen (Ind.) College, died at his home on Nov. 16 after a three-year illness. During the 1950s, Umble was instrumental in introducing theater to the Mennonite Church. He founded the theater program at Goshen and established the college radio station.

- **New pastors oriented.** A record number of new pastors attended orientation sessions for Mennonite Church agencies in Elkhart County, Ind., and Scottdale, Pa. Some 28 ministers from eight conferences in the U.S. and Canada attended the annual New Pastors Orientation, Sept. 30-Oct. 2. Information about next year's event is available from Kathy Harshbarger at the MBCM Ministerial Information Center at 219 294-7523.—*MBCM*

- **Historians wanted.** Résumés are now being accepted for researchers and writers for the 100-year history of involvement in Philadelphia by Lancaster and Franconia Mennonite Conferences. Plans are to publish the 1899-1999 record by the year 2000. Résumés can be sent to Freeman Miller, 2027 N. Carlisle St., Philadelphia, PA 19121.

- **Graduate classes added.** Goshen (Ind.) College will offer graduate-level courses for the first time during the next semester. The two education courses are designed to help teachers meet state standards for recertification.

- **Correction.** The article "Funds for churches in Ethiopia continue to grow" in the Nov. 12 issue of *Gospel Herald* incorrectly attributed the quotation, "The persecution didn't scatter people; it brought people together," to Nathan Hege. Ethiopian church leader Kefyalew Cherinet was the speaker.

- **AMBS offers sermon notes.** The Bible department of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is offering sermon notes on the Advent lectionary texts on the AMBS World Wide Web site. Writers are Perry Yoder, Ben Ollenberger, Willard Swartley, Jacob Elias, and Mary Schertz. The address of the AMBS web site is http://members.aol.com/MennoSem/-home.htm

- **Educators' meeting held.** Representatives from the boards and development offices of 13 Mennonite high schools met Oct. 25-27 for the biannual meeting of the Secondary Education Council. Twenty elementary schools also sent representatives. Keynote speaker was D. Bruce Lockerbie, chair of a counseling service to schools and churches. Numerous workshops were offered, including cultivating donor relationships, legal concerns in non-profit accounting, and developing alumni support.
—*Helen Lapp*

- **Stewardship Sunday moved.** Next year's Stewardship Sunday in churches will be observed on May 4, 1997. This is a change from the traditional November date. Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries changed the date because of scheduling difficulties with other special observances.

- **New appointments:**

Eunice Culp, vice president of Human Resources, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, Ind.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Joy Lapp began as interim pastor at Mountain Community Mennonite Church, Palmer, Colo., on Sept. 1.

Garry and Gloria Jost were ordained as pastors of Pacific Covenant Mennonite Church, Canby, Ore., on Nov. 3.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Mary Beyeler began her sixth Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) term on Sept. 1, in church planting and congregational development in Japan.

Garry and Ruth Denlinger began their sixth MBM term on Sept. 1, relating to Messianic Jews and teaching in Haifa, Israel.

Colleen and Pablo Fast began their second MBM term on Oct. 1 as church planters with Paz, an interdenominational mission outreach in Brazil.

Kirk and Marilyn Hanger will begin their second MBM term on Jan. 1 as church planters in Mexico.

Miriam Krantz began her ninth MBM term Nov. 1 as a nutrition consultant and writer with United Mission to Nepal.

David Moser began his second MBM term on Nov. 15, serving in community and reconciliation work in Northern Ireland.

Gustavo Ramirez-Cruz and Twila Jean Ramirez, Elverson, Pa., will begin a three-year MBM term on Jan. 1 as church planters in Mexico City.

Bonnie and Robert Stevenson began their second MBM term on Aug. 1 as church planters in Mexico.

Mark and Mary Thiessen-Nation, Los Angeles, Calif., leave Dec. 2 for a three-year MBM term at the London (England) Mennonite Centre.

Margaret and Paul Wyse began their eighth MBM term on Nov. 1 as support staff for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Uganda.

- **New books:**

Reshaping Your Marriage is edited by A. Don Augsburger. Available from Masthof Press at 610 286-6860.

- **Job openings:**

Administrator, Sarasota (Fla.) Christian School. Qualifications include master's degree in education or related field and administrative experience. Send résumé and references to Nora Hess, 7462 Castle Dr., Sarasota, FL 34240.

What students expect from Mennonite schools

When asked what should be the role of Mennonite schools, students responded:

- To prepare for a secular world in a Mennonite context
- To create Mennonite community and preserve the past
- To provide a safe place for asking questions

Students today are thoughtful, curious, and committed. They need our support.

Admissions counselor, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include representing the college with prospective students and their parents. Qualifications include writing and speaking skills, willingness to travel, bachelor's degree, and related experience. Eleven-month position begins Feb. 3, 1997; application deadline is Dec. 20. Send letter of application with three references and résumé to Marty Lehman, Director of Admissions, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

Campus administrator, Menno Haven, Inc. Responsibilities include overseeing housing, health care, and supportive services. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree in business, administration, health, or human services, and experience in long-term care administration. Send résumé and salary requirements to E. Lewis Leaman, President, Menno Haven, Inc., 1427 Philadelphia Ave., Chambersburg, PA 17201.

Church administrator, Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church. Responsibilities include managing the church's financial system, supervision of clerical and maintenance staff and church facilities, and assisting in organizational work of pastors. Qualifications require computer skills, minimum two to three years experience, and four-year college degree or equivalent experience. Position begins mid-December. Inquiries and résumés can be sent to Congregational Chair, Akron Mennonite Church, PO Box 208, Akron, PA 17501; fax 717 859-1488.

Special education faculty position, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Involves graduate and undergraduate teaching. Qualifications include doctorate (or near completion), and three to five years of teaching experience. Send letter of application, vitae, transcripts, and three references by Dec. 15 to William Hawk, Vice President and Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

NEW MEMBERS

Blough, Hollsopple, Pa., Marilyn Hesson and Linda Yoder.

Burr Oak, Rensselaer, Ind.: James Rayburn, Barbara Rayburn, and Brandon Rayburn.

Lititz, Pa.: Regina Thomas and Bradley Zimmerman.

Plains, Hatfield, Pa.: Merrill Derstine, Nancy Derstine, Ruben DeLeon, and Lynn Swartley.

Prince of Peace, Corvallis, Ore.: Andy McKee, Mona McKee, Dave Morris, Sue Morris, and Cathy Schowalter.

BIRTHS

Cowardin, RaMona Stahl and David, Philadelphia, Pa., Brenna DeLancey Stahl (first child), Oct. 28.

Detweiler, Tara Paul and Don, Telford, Pa., Autumn Janae (second child), Oct. 31.

Fox, Jill Martin and Steven, Ephrata, Pa., Katelyn Rose (third child), Sept. 26.

Kauffman, Jeanie Shue and Scott, Sarasota, Fla., Elizabeth Jan (fourth child), Oct. 15.

Miller, Renee Yoder and Nelson, Sarasota, Fla., Ryan Nelson (first child), Sept. 23.

Mullet, Jill Basinger and Steve, Elkhart, Ind., Luke Basinger (second child), Aug. 31.

Shantz, Joyce Oaks and Sean, Fayetteville, N.C., Clarissa Nancy (second child), Oct. 31.

MARRIAGES

Kandel-Rose: Korey Kandel, Sarasota, Fla. (Bahia Vista), and Kristen Rose, Sarasota, Fla., Oct. 12, by Rich Chappell.

King-Nester: Darvis King, Gordonville, Pa. (Witmer Heights), and Shelly Nester, Normal, Ill. (Normal), Nov. 2, by Raymond Rohrer and Evelyn Bertsche.

DEATHS

Brenner, Edna Croft, 80, Wooster, Ohio. Born: July 16, 1916, New Bedford, Ohio, to Ira D. and Macy Lautenschlager Croft. Died: Oct. 28, 1996, Orrville, Ohio, of a stroke. Survivors—husband: William Brenner; daughters: Macy Steckley, Jane Kamp Meyers; sister: Marie Burger; 8 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Gilbert Nussbaum (second husband) and Earl D. Friedt (first husband). Funeral: Nov. 1, Orrville Mennonite Church, by John and Barbara Lehman and Norma Duerksen. Burial: Crown Hill Cemetery.

Charles, Merle Coss, 86, Hagerstown, Md. Born: June 10, 1910, Waynesboro, Pa., to Samuel R. and Nettie Coss Charles. Died: Oct. 27, 1996, Hagerstown, Md., of a stroke. Survivors—daughters: Brenda Auchmoody, Sandy Boward; sister: Lillian Shilling; 6 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Catherine Frances Charles (wife). Funeral: Oct. 30, Minnick Funeral Home, by Lewis M. Coss. Burial: Rest Haven Cemetery.

Gross, Lydia Kathryn Ruth, 86, Lansdale, Pa. Born: March 8, 1910, North Wales, Pa., to Melvin and Sallie Koffel Ruth. Died: Oct. 19, 1996, Towamencin Twp., Pa., of Alzheimer's disease. Survivors—sons: Clyde R., Vernon R.; brother and sisters: Jacob K. Ruth, Esther K. Landes, Alma K. Keyser, Sarah K. Landes; half-brother: Melvin Ruth; 9 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Clayton O. Gross (husband). Funeral and burial: Oct. 31, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by Truman H. Brunk Jr. and David A. Stevens.

Heebner, Norman R., 75, Doylestown, Pa. Born: June 24, 1921, Lansdale, Pa., to Albert and Alice Moyer Heebner. Died: Oct. 21, 1996, Doylestown, Pa. Survivors—children: Sharon, Richard, Jerry; brother and sisters: Albert, Sara Benner, Grace Seitz; 3 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Catherine Hallman Heebner (wife). Funeral and burial: Oct. 24, Doylestown Mennonite Church, by Duane Bishop.

Kooker, Abram A., 78, Harleysville, Pa. Born: June 29, 1918, Silverdale, Pa., to Abraham and Elsie Allebach Kooker. Died: Oct. 19, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Florence Mitman Kooker; children: Harley, Bruce, Karen Landis; brother and sisters: Richard, Ruth H. Yoder, Pauline H. Bergey; 7 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Harold (son). Funeral and burial: Oct. 22, Rockhill Mennonite Church, by Mike L. Derstine.

Miller, Lois E., 68. Born: Sept. 8, 1928, Goshen, Ind., to Levi and Ruth Tyson Hochstetler. Died: Sept. 12, 1996. Survivors—husband: Lloyd Miller; brothers and sisters: Ernest and Otis Hochstetler, Fern, Faye, Gladys; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 12, Marion Mennonite Church, by Forrest Hayes and Lewis Miller. Burial: Benton Lutheran Cemetery.

Reed, Carl James, 75. Born: April 7, 1921, Big Spring, Md., to Charles and Florence Long Reed. Died: Nov. 3, 1996, Hagerstown, Md., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Anna Pearl Reed; children: Carol Bailey, Krista Young, Carl Eugene; brothers and sisters: Charles, Daniel, Ivy Ridenour, Betty Wise; 3 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 6, Community Mennonite Church, by Lewis M. Coss and Ray Phillips. Burial: Cedar Lawn Cemetery.

Shover, David Marlin, 57, Chambersburg, Pa. Born: Aug. 28, 1939, Newville, Pa., to David E. and Mary Ellen Charlton Shover. Died: Sept. 26, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa. Survivors—brother and sister: Harold E. and Mildred E. Congregational membership: Marion Mennonite Church. Funeral: Sept. 30, Egger Funeral Home, by Cleon Nyce and Merle Cordell. Burial: Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Snavely, D. Marie Eshleman, 81, Manheim, Pa. Born: April 8, 1915, Landisville, Pa., to J. Henry and Maria Nolt Eshleman. Died: Oct. 30, 1996, Manheim, Pa. Survivors—children: Marian R. Nolt, Joanne Kreiser, Herbert W., Linda S. Keener; brothers and sister: Phares and Henry N. Eshleman, Arlene Piarantoni; 13 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: J. Warren Snavely (husband). Funeral: Nov. 2, Lititz Mennonite Church, by Dennis W. Ernest, Jacob W. Frederick, and J. Clair Hollinger. Burial: Hammer Creek Mennonite Cemetery.

Springer, Vera Riley, 70, Milford, Neb. Born: April 25, 1926, Milford, Neb., to William and Sarah Stutzman Riley. Died: Oct. 27, 1996, Lincoln, Neb., of heart failure. Survivors—husband: Larry Springer; children: Van, Mark, Wendell, Jennifer Brown, Shelly Troyer; brothers and sisters: Ernie, Ferman, and Walt Riley, Elva Reil, Mertice Hostetler, Naomi Yeackley; 12 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Congregational membership: Beth-El Mennonite Church. Funeral: Oct. 29, Bellwood Mennonite Church, by John C. King. Burial: East Fairview Cemetery.

Yoder, Daniel N., 90, Orrville, Ohio. Born: May 11, 1906, Holmesville, Ohio, to Nicholas and Elizabeth Yoder. Died: Oct. 4, 1996, Orrville, Ohio. Survivors—wife: Katie Yoder; children: Darrel, Mary Troyer, Esther Short; 9 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Monroe (son). Funeral: Oct. 7, Orrville Mennonite Church, by John and Barbara Lehman. Burial: Oak Grove Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Letting the whole field grow with patience

(continued from page 8)

those who choose patience over judgment, a new aspect of grace will emerge over the very issues that presently raise our anxiety.

Christ sounds this call for patience because humans are not capable of dependably and consistently separating wheat from tares. Any number of "holy wars" could provide ample evidence that humans are not capable of accurately and effectively judging for God. Scripture confirms that only God can make judgments as to who is in the kingdom and that, in due course, judgment will be made. In the meantime, Christ asks us to be patient with one another. Grace emerges in new ways to those who disagree, yet stay in relationship with each other.

Another reason for Christ's call for patience is that God has determined the ultimate moment of separation. I believe there may be some surprises. In Christ's time on earth, he was often criticized for accepting invitations to social functions from "tares." The outcast ate with him, and he endured the anxious comments of the impatient. This story of grace is a message to the anxious ones who zealously desire to cleanse the church: be patient, do not judge. The time for separation has not yet come, but when it does, God can do it properly.

In the meantime, maybe we need to let the whole field grow in patience. Christ says, "Let them all grow together" (Matt. 13:30). In our patience, we become good wheat and trust what God is doing with the story of salvation. Without the assurance of perfect judgment on all issues, there is room for humility. Humility leaves room for patience, and patience leaves room for God to gracefully work between us. When grace passes between us, a new aspect of God's style of life can be discovered. These grace-charged discoveries become God's community-deepening lessons to each one of us who call Jesus our Lord.

Jason Kuniholm is pastor of Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church. He and his wife, Joanne, have one daughter, Mia.

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and support the work of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church.

Celebrate the season of peace by remembering the Anabaptist dedication to peace. Commissioned by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, this beautiful four-color fraktur commemorates the birth of Menno Simons 500 years ago. Artist Roma J. Ruth created this memento of Menno's life and ministry from a text chosen by John L. Ruth.

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What's going on with integration?

Every so often, we who work in this office look up to find a group touring the Mennonite Publishing House and peering over our shoulders. Often *Gospel Herald* readers identify themselves. They give a compliment or ask a question. Like this one from a group a week or so ago: "What's happening with integration? We've read your reports, and we're confused!"

That's not surprising. Keeping track of merger has proven to be quite a task. We've been trying to sniff out a direction from all that's being done by a variety of groups—though I'm still not sure we have it straight.

The decision to merge the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) came in July 1995 at a joint meeting in Wichita, Kan. In the 16 months since, work on integration seems to have proceeded on two fronts:

1. Used to working toward the future, the staffs of the MC ***program boards*** and the GC ***commissions*** have begun to look at where their work intersects. Some they've started to bring together—such as one voluntary service program. For others they've appointed a task force—such as for missions.

When these boards and commissions meet, more and more of their agenda includes integration. As Everett Thomas, president of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, told the MC General Board last week: "The past year and a half has been a balancing act between doing the ministries we were created to do and dealing with integration."

2. Meanwhile, the MC and GC general boards together appointed an ***Integration Committee*** "to guide and monitor the integration process." Appointment was one thing; getting started was another. At its first rather hastily called meeting little more than a year ago, some came late and others left early because of previous appointments. Then came the resignations of both the MC and GC general secretaries, both of whom sit on the committee. By the time replacements were named and in office, it wasn't until this past October that the committee, with its current composition, met for the first time. "It felt like we were starting all over," one member comments.

According to John Murray, one of the committee's cochairs, this "new" Integration Committee stepped back and reevaluated some of the work that had already been done. "We inherited a model that called for national boundaries [between the U.S. and Canada]," says the other cochair, Dorothy Nickel Friesen. "Now we're coming back with a model that moves away from this."

The new proposal calls for one binational denomination with regional centers: one in Canada and three or more in the U.S. While the general boards, meeting together in Chicago last week, had lots of questions (see story on page 9), they told the committee to proceed.

The boards also clearly put the Integration Committee in charge of the process from here on. The MC General Board, for example, told the Integration Committee that its first priority should be to integrate the two general boards. Next it should decide how and when other entities should merge, such as missions, publications, and schools.

So how should *Gospel Herald* report all this? In the past, we tried to have a story on every major development in brainstorming about integration. This has included information from commissions, boards, task forces, and special committees. With so many ideas from so many different fronts—some of which change almost weekly—we sometimes become confused ourselves.

For the future, we intend to take our cues from the lead established by the MCGB. We'll report on integration decisions by the general boards. We'll cover meetings of the Integration Committee. We'll also report on significant integration decisions of boards and commissions—noting, however, that these are tentative, subject to approval by the Integration Committee and the general boards. But we'll carry few reports from task forces set up to brainstorm merger directions for specific areas.

For many of us attending Wichita '95, the vote on integration seemed to be a move of the Spirit. In the months since, as progress on merger has surged then waned, as promises have become anxieties and some opportunities turned into problems, it has sometimes been difficult to keep our eyes on the goal.

To be faithful to the Wichita '95 vote, we dare not let complexity sidetrack the process. We at *Gospel Herald* pledge to do what we can with our reporting to make what's happening understandable. We don't want confusion, either for ourselves—or our tour groups.—*jlp*

December 10, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

Scripture is not an end in itself. It is a guide to an intimate relationship with our creator, redeemer, friend.

From what the Bible says to whom the Scripture reveals

We can call the Bible inerrant, infallible, and authoritative until we are blue in the face. But if we don't do what it says, it doesn't matter what we call it.

by John C. Murray

God, speaking through Jeremiah and Ezekiel, confronted the children of Israel as people "who have eyes to see but do not see, who have ears to hear but do not hear" (Jer. 5:21, Ezek. 12:2). At the close of the parable of the soils, Jesus invites "anyone who has ears, let him hear" (Mark 4:9-23). The Spirit, speaking though John to the seven churches in Asia Minor, declared, "Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches" (Rev 2:7-11).

It may seem strange, even heretical, for a pastor and church leader to admit this, but at times in my life and ministry, I wonder if the Bible really speaks to us today. I recall sitting behind my desk trying to write a sermon for the funeral of a two-year-old child. We had gotten to know this child and his family when he and our oldest son were both premature babies in a newborn intensive care unit. That two-year-old died because a breathing monitor failed to operate. I wondered, "Does the Bible speak to us today?"

I also recall driving toward my hometown of Kouts, Ind., knowing that in a few hours I would be sharing in the funeral service of my

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Levi Miller:
Another chance to reaffirm our primary allegiance 6

'Perspective' by J. Robert Charles:
Will NATO go east? 8

Ethiopian Mennonite leaders die in hijacked plane crash 10

In our use of the Bible, we have become too much like piano tuners who know the inner-workings of their instrument but forget the music that it produces.

cousin who had committed suicide. I asked, "Does the Bible speak to us today?"

I often meet with couples whose marriages seem to be falling apart. I talk with parents and children who are hurting one another with words of distrust and anger. I walk with older persons who resist the nursing care that they need for their own safety and well-being. I counsel with employees who are unfairly dismissed from their jobs. I listen to farmers who are struggling because of disease in their livestock and too much or too little rain. I am invited to walk alongside people who have been physically and sexually abused. Because of these experiences, many times I wonder, "Does the Bible speak to us today?"

Yet, in spite of my times of questioning, I have experienced that even in the midst of life's deepest pain, the Bible does speak to us today. I have discovered that at those times of doubt, the problem is not the Bible's ability to speak. It is my ability to listen.

One of the reasons that we have difficulty listening to the Scripture is because *we can become preoccupied with our own preconceived notions and beliefs.* This can be as blatant as deciding what we believe truth is and then searching the Scripture to prove it. It can be as subtle as simply not being aware that we are listening to the Scripture through the filters of our own language and culture while the Scripture was written in a different language and culture. If we study Scripture without recognizing it as a cross-cultural experience, we are bound to have ears which don't hear very well.

The Scripture actually comes to us from several other cultures. Our lack of understanding and of interest in the languages and cultures of the Bible can leave us deaf to the depths of the message. The danger includes missing part of the message and misunderstanding it.

At least two things can help open our ears and prevent cultural deafness. We can develop a deeper awareness of the language, culture, history, and geography of the Scripture; and we can listen carefully to how people from other cultures hear the Bible speaking to them.

Another reason we have difficulty listening to Scripture is perhaps the opposite of the first problem. True, we can be deaf because we don't understand the biblical languages and cultures. But *we can also become so focused on language and culture that we miss the message.* That message is good news! It is healing, hope, love, forgiveness, and new life.

Sometimes I fear that in our skill in dissecting the language and culture of the Bible, we have become like piano experts who can explain the inner workings of a piano. We know all the joints and pivots, hammers and strings, and the impact of structural design on tonal quality, yet we don't have a clue that this instrument can produce music which expresses sorrow and joy, anger and love, pain and celebration.

Some claim to be able to sort out all the so-called sources of the Scripture. We can parse a Greek verb to its present infinitives and can read our Hebrew backward and forward. We are so good at all of this that we sometimes overlook the redeeming love revealed in a dying human form on a cross and the hope revealed in an empty tomb.

A third reason we may have difficulty listening to the Scripture is that *we are much more concerned with what we say about the Bible than we are about what the Bible says.*

At various times in the church's history, there have been debates about how to view Scripture. How do we understand the authority of scriptural commands regarding circumcision and eating certain foods? Does belief in a round earth destroy the authority of Scripture? We have argued about which lofty words we should use to describe the Bible: inerrant, infallible, authoritative, essential.

Now I suspect this debate is important for clarification and understanding. However, we can call the Bible inerrant, infallible, and authoritative until we are blue in the face, but if we don't feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, bring good news to the poor, release the captives, and free the oppressed, it doesn't matter very much what we say about the Bible. In the great judgment scene described by Jesus, recorded in Matthew 25, the Son of Man does not ask the sheep or the goats what they believed about the Bible. The only question asked of both groups is whether they have done what the Bible says.

Finally, we have difficulty listening to the

Scriptures because *we are more concerned about what Scripture declares than we are about who the Scripture reveals.*

The apostle Paul is perhaps one of the best examples of this. As a young man named Saul, he showed enormous promise as a student of the Scripture. He sat under the teaching of the great rabbi Gamaliel. The truth of what the Scripture declared was deeply etched into his being. He was so convinced of its importance and significance that he earnestly and violently defended what the Scripture declared.

But one day on a road to Damascus, he came face-to-face with the one whom the Scripture reveals. After that encounter, he heard the Scripture in a way he had never heard it before.

When John begins his Gospel story he says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The "Word" he is referring to is not a *what* which has been translated into various languages and run through a printing press. The Word is a *who,* none other than the only begotten Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth.

Scripture is not an end in itself. Rather, Scripture is a guide to an intimate spiritual relationship with our Creator, Deliverer, Redeemer, and Friend. If we never get beyond *what* the Scripture declares to know *who* the Scripture reveals, our ears will be deaf, our hearts will be hard, our actions will be violent, and our hope will be lost.

Let anyone who has ears to hear, listen. The Bible does speak to us today. Yet even when we consciously try to apply these principles to our reading and study, there will still be times of such utter chaos, violence, and evil that it will feel like the Bible is silent. In those times we can remember the prophet Elijah, who anxiously listened for the voice of God through the harshness of the wind, the intensity of the fire, and the violent shaking of the earthquake. It was only after the noisy chaos ended that he finally heard the still small voice proclaiming healing and hope.

May all who have ears to hear, earnestly and patiently listen.

John C. Murray is the pastor of Emma Mennonite Church, Lagrange, Ind. He also serves as cochair of the Integration Committee. This article is adapted from a presentation he gave at a pastors' conference at Goshen (Ind.) College in May.

See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."
—Mark 1:2b-3, NRSV

Gospel Herald

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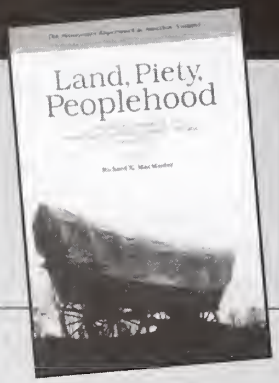
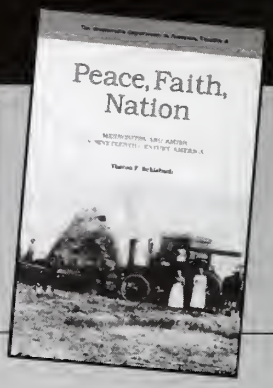
Mennonite Experience in America Series



The Mennonite Experience in America Series weaves together the histories of all Mennonite and Amish groups in the United States. It offers something new in Mennonite and Amish history: an attempt to tell not only the inside story but also how one religious people, or set of peoples, has lived and developed along with the pluralism of the nation.



Land, Piety, Peoplehood

The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790

Richard K. MacMaster follows the Mennonite migration to the New World and analyzes the economic, social, political, and religious forces which drove these people out of the Old World into America. MacMaster paints a portrait of the lives of the early American Mennonite people. Volume 1.
Paper, 344 pages, $19.95; in Canada $28.50.

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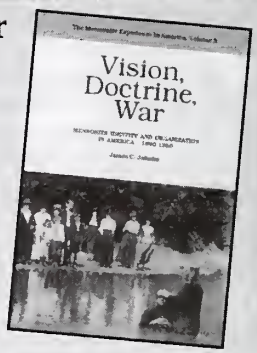

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Thanks for the challenging and inspiring article, ***Figuring Out When Enough Is Enough*** (Nov. 19). Mary and John Martin are examples of what can be done with careful planning and by dedicating all of life, including modest income, to God.

In my 12 years of stewardship teaching and financial work in Lancaster Mennonite Conference, I too have found persons who are joyful stewards, making life-changing decisions that connect faith and money. There are those who double their tithe, who increase their giving by another one percent of their income at the beginning of a year (even with teenage children), and who live on frugal budgets and joyfully give the rest away.

We need to find creative ways of sharing these stories that are living, yet many times hidden among us. And I would hope that in future articles, you would not need to use pseudonyms. Instead, may the real Mary's and John's be able to tell their stories authentically and humbly.

When Jesus is Lord of life, there will be a difference in how we live and in what we give.

Nelson W. Martin
Lititz, Pa.

Thank you for the global perspectives of your Nov. 12 issue. Particularly pertinent is Indonesian Paulus Widjaja's article, ***'Let Us Get to the Shore, and Then I'll Tell You My History.'*** This article makes an import contribution to understanding current Western Mennonite involvement in God's mission.

Widjaja underscores our use of the words "individualism," "operationalism," and "egalitarianism," which hurts people in his country. This, of course, is not the language of the gospel. It is that of the long-term Western experiment of modernity, which American Mennonites have bought into quite enthusiastically, though belatedly. Now it becomes difficult for us to recognize that the language of Western culture can be so hurtful to others.

Is it, after all, possible that we Western Christians have become deafened to the good news of the Hebrew-Christian worldview, which offers sharp criticism and severe judgment of our self-defined freedom and justice and our self-declared progress and human development?

Your editorial, ***What Will Get Us to the Shore?*** in the same issue effectively underlines our need for help in swimming in the new cross-currents of the multicultural waters we have entered. But is it possible that the real danger is the illusion that we have been safely swimming all along in harmless waters?

It may be possible that what we do not want to hear from Widjaja and other non-Western Christians is not simply their culture's critique of ours. What we may not want to hear is the very gospel itself—a gospel to which they have often responded under very difficult circumstances.

David A. Shank
Sturgis, Mich.

Thanks for the Nov. 12 issue of *Gospel Herald*, especially the lead article by Paulus Widjaja, ***'Let Us Get to the Shore, and Then I'll Tell You My History,'*** and your editorial, ***What Will Get Us to the Shore***? Looking on from a distance, it seems that North American Mennonites are anything but clear as to where they want to or need to go with the reorganization. I hope we can listen seriously to the challenges of voices like Widjaja's.

While we smugly measure the success of past missionary efforts by the growth of the Mennonite Church, in the Southern Hemisphere we have been forced to redefine "Mennonite" to the point that most Mennonites of 50 years ago would not claim the vast majority of those who today are part of the worldwide Mennonite organizational structures. Has the Anabaptist Vision slipped through the fingers of the institutional hands who try to hold onto and shape it for the future?

Along with other changes which this new consciousness of the worldwide church-in-mission is bringing upon us, we need a qualitative leap in our understanding of the Anabaptist Vision itself. This would help us see that this vision is not tied to the Mennonite Church. The Anabaptist Vision as a way of understanding the gospel is alive and well around the world, crossing denominational lines.

Our new vision statement, *Vision: Healing and Hope*, says nothing about forming Mennonite churches. Yet we continue to operate in many places around the world as though that were our goal. Rather than the expansion of Mennonite Church structures worldwide, perhaps our goal in mission ought to be the acculturation of Jesus' message in each local culture. In this way the church is free to grow uniquely in each place.

I write as a convinced Christian missionary of Anabaptist theological convictions, who stands in the Mennonite Church tradition.

Willis G. Horst
Formosa, Argentina

I just received my copy of the Nov. 26 issue of *Gospel Herald*, hot off the press. And I was blessed by Dorothy Nickel Friesen's lead article, ***Did We Get It Right, Dorothy?***

Last summer I helped with the baptism of nine young persons that I had taught in Sunday school classes at various stages of their lives. During that service I experienced some of the same feelings that Friesen shared. Her statement, "It was a holy time," is exactly how I felt at the moment I poured the water and watched it run down the faces of the nine young people.

Friesen's was certainly an uplifting article for an old Sunday school teacher!

Glenn Millslagle
Scottdale, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle

With Marxism out of vogue:

Another chance to reaffirm

Almost a decade since the fall of Marxism as a viable ideology, one asks what was its appeal to some Christians and what its legacy might be for Mennonites.

by Levi Miller

I write during the first week in July, when Canada and the United States are celebrating their national holidays of independence. My daughter and I mowed a Mennonite cemetery this morning; it was our quiet way of celebrating the Fourth of July in memory of our nonresistant forebears. Since this burial ground began in the early 1800s, only two markers have carried the flags that the American Legion uses to decorate the graves of war veterans on national holidays.

All morning the radio announced that Boris Yeltsin has just won the first free national election in Russia in over 1,000 years. This is a major change for a land that had been ruled by Marxist dictators during most of the 20th century. Its denial of the Christian faith notwithstanding, Marxism and socialism were admired by groups of Christians during much of this century. That secular religion seemed to have a strong appeal, particularly to Christians whose goal was social justice and who had lost much of their faith in biblical Christianity.

Almost a decade since the fall of Marxism as a viable political ideology, one still asks why that ideology appealed to some Christians and what its legacy is to Mennonites. Two decades ago a Mennonite, Doug Hostetter, visited Cuba and suggested in *Sojourners* magazine that "perhaps we can learn more of the God who calls his people both to liberation during time of oppression and [to] faithfulness during the sojourn in the new land."

With the installation of a Marxist government, Cuba was looked upon by many as a model for the future of Latin America. Hostetter visited the island and gave a positive portrait of a government which "appears closer to the ideals of justice than the church."

Hostetter was not alone in his positive assessment. I lived in Puerto Rico and Venezuela in the 1960s and early 1980s, and the appeal of Marxism was strong, especially in universities and among the various groups which claimed to be for peace and justice across the Americas.

The appeal was to the justice part of peace. Conventional wisdom during the 1960s said that peace could not be achieved without justice. Justice was generally defined in economic terms: that all have sufficient food and shelter. The discussions in relief and service agencies began in relation to giving fishes (charity) and then moved on to teaching people how to fish (service and development). Finally, in achieving a post-1960s maturity, we began talking about everyone having access to the lake. Here was the topic of justice, and generally the evil was the lake's owner, perhaps a rich landholder or a multinational corporation.

Many believe that socialist and Marxist governments would give everyone access to the lake, for everyone would own the lake and everyone would have enough fish to eat. Few Mennonites crossed over and openly endorsed Marxist regimes as a promised land. Most contented themselves with promoting some variation of socialism, especially if it came out of Scandinavia or eastern European countries.

Duane K. Friesen, in his book *Christian Peacemaking and International Conflict* (Herald Press, 1986) concluded that this system was *the* Christian one because a society should distribute resources to meet a people's fundamental needs. He quoted with approval the Swiss theologian Paul Tillich, who said that socialism "is the only possible economic system from the Christian point of view."

Several decades of this teaching have left the church with a strong sense of justice and less of service. A college professor told me recently that she was discouraged that many of the brightest and best students she sees are looking for advocacy jobs in national capitols. She wondered about the decline in service programs and service as an ideal. I told her that it seemed to me the kids had simply learned well the philosophies they were taught. Several decades of teaching that service and charity are Band-Aids at best and supportive of oppressive regimes at worst will not elicit many applications for service programs. Changing the structures—the more political the better—this was seen as justice.

Much that was being defined as justice was simply an apologetic for socialism or a Marxist revolution, such as Cuba had achieved. Many of us tried to be sympathetic with those who arrived at these views. We warned others against the folly of service, charity, and the

even older Christian experience of character transformation called conversion. If we were overseas volunteers, we were placed in lands with much poverty, and we saw that our efforts would have little impact. Some had lost belief in a character-changing Christian faith of the heart and will. They could not blame the local people for their misfortune. There was no one to blame except a colossal United States and the democratic West with capitalism, competition, and consumerism. Marxism was at least an alternative.

What made Marxism so appealing to so many in the West? Richard Ingrams, the recent biographer of *Muggeridge*, speculated on its appeal as young Malcolm and Kitty Dobbs Muggeridge went to live in the promised land of the Soviet Union during the 1930s. Unlike Hostetter's praise of Cuba, however, the Muggeridges found a terrible land of doublespeak and starvation, similar to what our Russian Mennonite emigré cousins in Canada told us in their horror stories of the Soviet government.

Ingrams says that many American socialists found Marxism so appealing because of its power. People may disappear during the night, but power was in the hands of the right system.

Marxism also had a very religious element. Many people found the very anti-Christian effort of Marxism was its great appeal. The Marxists would free people from the bondage of Christianity.

The biggest legacy of Marxism here in North America, however, came, not from the Soviet Union, but from Marxism as it was mediated to us from Latin America and the various liberation theologies that were based on a Marxist view of life. At the last Mennonite biennial Christian education consultation, the "base Christian community" model was lifted up as one of the main forms of Christian education for the future. Although the speaker and none of us were using it or knew of anyone who was, it seemed virtuous simply based on its liberation theology origins.

That reminded me how powerful this Marxist-informed image of the church was, even if, at this stage, the image is probably outdated. A recent study of 3,580 Catholic seminary students in Brazil, considered the birthplace of liberation theology, found that the current crop of students believe liberation theology is "something of the past." Current students are far less political and much more evangelical than their predecessors, the study said.

Finally, with the demise of Marxism and its secular assumptions about humans, we may see the reappearance of Christian discussions of character formation, conversion, charity, and service. Marxism's failure bears out the truth of Jesus' statement that the poor will be with us always and that evil is too pervasive for a materialistic ideology to address. Therefore, we may see a new call for Christian conversion and giving in goodwill and love to those in need.

Several years ago Robert Charles wrote in *Gospel Herald* (March 1, 1994) that he'll give one cheer for communism before it fades. Charles saw the former Yugoslavia's communism at least keeping order against the bloodbath which nationalism's passions released. I will acknowledge the right of a government to maintain order, but I still will not cheer. If believers in Cuba (or some who have escaped) or *Aussiedler* (the Mennonite exiles from Russia, now the largest Mennonite group in Europe) want to give that cheer, I will listen to them.

It would be hypocritical for me to cheer. I have not lived in close quarters with this ideology but rather in a democratic society, which has given a great deal of room for nonresistant Christians to live and form communities. I realize that relatively free societies also have their own idolatries that we in the church cite repeatedly. Nonetheless, I am deeply grateful for that freedom.

In the next century, other ideologies will call for more allegiance than Christians can or should give. But the strongest antidote to such idolatry is a strong faith in God and the formation of communities that nurture believing in and living the Christian gospel. The basic freedoms which Canadian and U.S. Christians have are cause for thankfulness, to be sure, but they are not the triumph of the Lamb. The triumph of the Lamb, in the apostolic vision of Revelation, is in a defenseless faith in Jesus Christ and the cross.

Levi Miller, Scottdale, Pa., is head of the Congregational Literature Division of Mennonite Publishing House and a member of Kingview Mennonite Church. He and his wife, Gloria, have two daughters and one son.

Will NATO go east?

This alliance was formed to keep out the armies of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Today these countries are clamoring to become part of the club.

by J. Robert Charles

As foreign and defense ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) gather this month in Brussels, they must wrestle with one of the most baffling issues the alliance has faced since its creation in 1949. Their task? To find an answer to the current version of NATO's "eastern question."

For decades the issue seemed a simple one: to deter, through a constantly changing mixture of defense and diplomacy, a menacing Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies; in short, to keep the East out of the West.

But five years ago that version of the question went into history's dustbin. That's also where many observers and critics felt NATO deserved to go.

A trio of reasons, however, allowed NATO to survive the demise of its longtime threat from the East. Its staying alive was—and is—due, first of all, to forces of institutional inertia. As we all know, when a problem goes away, the people working to solve it do not. For NATO, another problem came along in the former Yugoslavia—though it would take years for NATO to decide if or how to respond.

NATO's survival beyond the end of the Cold War also reflects the fact that its members—Canada, the United States, and fourteen European countries—still value the consultation and cooperation they developed over the years as allies, despite constant squabbling. Even if there are no longer Soviets to keep out, NATO provides a convenient way to keep the U.S. engaged and the Germans contained in Europe—goals which hardly seem imprudent in light of two devastating pan-European conflicts earlier this century.

Finally, NATO is still around today because it adapted to new times and circumstances. It has reduced, though not (yet?) abolished, its heavy reliance on nuclear weapons in its military strategy. And it created several programs —the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and the Partnership for Peace in 1994—to forge new relations with countries of the former Warsaw Pact.

All of which brings us back to today's version of NATO's eastern question.

No longer is it one of how to keep out the armies of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Instead, it is whether to admit as members these and perhaps other erstwhile adversaries now eager to join the NATO club.

In other words, the eastern question now facing a western alliance approaching its fiftieth anniversary is whether or not—to paraphrase that famous bit of advice from Horace Greeley—to "go east, middle-aged man!"

Proponents of eastward expansion note that the alliance has enlarged its membership three times since 1949, bringing in Greece, Turkey, Germany, and Spain. So on what principle could new applications be refused? Moreover, bringing in former communist states could help to reeducate their militaries to function in still-fragile domestic democratic frameworks.

Furthermore, by bringing in Poland, the fears still haunting that country's relations with Germany could be eased (in the same way that postwar German-French relations found equal footing within the same alliance). And going east might prove popular in the U.S., with its high number of voters from east European background.

Skeptics argue that eastward expansion, while feasible, contains serious liabilities. In addition to violating the spirit in which German unification was negotiated in 1990, such a move likely would require higher military expenditures at a time of shrinking defense spending. And by extending an "insurance policy" to a historically unstable region, NATO would make a high-risk commitment on which it could well renege if crunch time ever arrived.

Above all, opponents argue, expansion to former Warsaw Pact members could help recreate the very threat it hopes to counter. By inflaming Russian nationalists and resentful communists, NATO could undermine the Yeltsin regime and incite an aggressive foreign policy aimed, however futile it might prove to be, at restoring the lost Soviet empire.

Will NATO decide to go East, to stay put, or to somehow split the difference?

The future, not only of the alliance, but of post-Cold War Europe as a whole, hangs in no small measure on how NATO answers its new eastern question.

J. Robert Charles teaches history at Goshen (Ind.) College and is coordinator for Africa and Europe at Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind.

MCC calls for aid and prayer for people in Bukavu, Zaire

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Although most Rwandan refugees around Goma, Zaire, have returned home, the situation further south in Bukavu is quite different. On Nov. 20, two Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers were in the first group of outsiders allowed into Bukavu since the town was captured by Zairian rebels at the end of October. After a one-day assessment visit, Terry Sawatsky, co-director of MCC's Africa programs, and Krista Rigalo, an MCC Zaire worker, reiterated the need for prayer and aid for Rwandans and Zairians around Bukavu.

The four Rwandan refugee camps MCC had helped support near Bukavu are now empty. Church contacts in Bukavu say the Interahamwe have taken the refugees hostage and are forcing them west, further into Zaire's interior. (The Interahamwe are Rwandan Hutus involved in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.) Sawatsky says the roads are not passable by vehicle and people are traveling on foot. The sick and some children have been left to die by the road. Some reports indicate as many as 250,000 people may be in this group. Zairian homes and farms along the refugees' route have been looted. A second group of some 175,000 refugees, also under Interahamwe control, have moved about 45 miles north of Bukavu.

Although Bukavu currently appears calm, an estimated 35 percent of Bukavu's 300,000 Zairian residents appear to be hiding in forests and villages outside town. During the rebel takeover, an unknown number of people were killed. Among the dead is Muta, a man who had recently become a Christian and was to be the first baptized member of the newly planted Bukavu Mennonite Church. Interahamwe and Zairian youth tortured Muta for three days, apparently because they thought his features indicated he was a Tutsi, and then shot him. The whereabouts and fate of many other friends of MCC workers are unknown.

Sawatsky reports countless Zairians around Bukavu have been uprooted and have lost their possessions. Zairian soldiers, many who serve unpaid, "took what they could and ran," says Sawatsky. He fears aid agencies will focus on assisting only Rwandans and will overlook the suffering of Zairians who are "hungry and have lost clothing, blankets, and many other items."

Sawatsky and Rigalo found the MCC office in Bukavu had been looted. Two MCC vehicles, a computer, and other items were stolen; the loss is estimated to be around $30,000 (U.S.). Neighbors reported finding two bodies in the yard of the MCC house.

This Nov. 20 visit was the first contact MCC had with its partners in Bukavu since MCC workers Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya evacuated the town on Oct. 27. "The situation will continue to be fluid and difficult to predict," says Sawatsky. "MCC will have to respond to changing dynamics." He notes, however, that "the need for blankets, warm clothing, seeds, and possibly food for Zairians already appears evident."—*Pearl Sensenig*

This 1994 photo shows a mother and child at Izirangabo, one of the four Rwandan refugee camps near Bukavu, Zaire, that Mennonite Central Committee helped to support. MCC workers fear that the camp's residents have been forced to flee into the hills to avoid recent fighting in Bukavu.

MCC continues to appeal for funds for its Central Africa Healing Fund. The agency is also asking for 50,000 blankets by Christmas. These can be dropped off at any MCC office, along with $4 Cdn. / $3 U.S. per blanket to pay for shipping. The blankets will go to needy people in the Bukavu area.

In addition, MCC, along with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Brethren Missions / Services, is asking churches to set aside a time of prayer for people in Zaire.

MEDA convention celebrates the 'art of business'

Winnipeg, Man. (MEDA)—Poetry, art, Nicaraguan dancers, a coffee house, and a gala benefit concert helped define "The Art of Business" theme at the annual convention of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

Some 530 people came from across North America, Asia, Africa, and Central and South America for the Oct. 31-Nov. 3 meeting. The purpose of the convention was to highlight the artistic side of running a company as well as to celebrate business as a supporter of the arts.

MEDA has adopted a new logo, shown above. The organization also went online in early November at www.meda.org .

"Creating and maintaining a successful business is indeed a work of art," said Howard Brenneman, chief executive officer of Mennonite Mutual Aid. Leaders who want to create "workplace masterpieces" must manage the dream, embrace error, encourage reflective feedback, remain optimistic, and set high but achievable goals.

Keynote speaker Laurie Beth Jones said that business leaders could learn a lot from the style and methods of Jesus, referring to her best-sellers *Jesus CEO* and *The Path*. This includes imbuing their efforts with compassion, self-discipline, action, and relationship skills. Jesus also had a clear and simple mission statement and never strayed from his task of giving abundant life, Jones added.

Through workshops and discussions, artistic topics mingled with conversations on subjects like creative marketing, workplace witnessing, and encouraging Russian entrepreneurs.

A benefit concert to raise funds for MEDA's work concluded the convention. Tenor Ben Heppner canceled his performance due to a throat infection and was replaced by soprano Tracey Dahl, bass Phillip Enns, and baritone Victor Engbrecht.

MEDA members were told that the economic development efforts they support had assisted 17,426 families in 10 countries last year. Nearly 20,000 loans had been extended to "people who live on the edge of subsistence and who struggle daily to meet needs," said Ron Braun, executive vice president.—*Wally Kroeker*

Ethiopian Mennonites die in airplane crash

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—Two leaders of the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) in Ethiopia were killed in the crash of an Ethiopian Airlines jetliner that was hijacked on Nov. 23.

The two were Beyene Gutema, member of the MKC executive committee, and Zelalem Ayenew, an MKC pastor.

Gutema served on the Mennonite World Conference General Council. He was scheduled to lead Africa Day evening worship Jan. 10, 1997, at the Mennonite World Conference's Assembly Gathered in Calcutta, India.

Both Gutema and Ayenew were married and had children. They were employed by World Vision in Ethiopia and were traveling to Kenya for work-related meetings.

Hijacked then crashed. The flight left Addis Ababa on Nov. 23 with plans to stop in Nairobi, Kenya, enroute to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Hijackers forced the pilot to fly south, where the plane eventually crashed into the Indian Ocean just off the shore of the Comoro Islands, which are slightly southeast of Tanzania. The death toll was 123 with 52 survivors.

"We grieve with the families of Beyene Gutema and Zelalem Ayenew," said Larry Miller, Mennonite World Conference executive secretary. "At this time of deep loss and sorrow, we pray that the 'Father of compassion and the God of all comfort' console our sisters and brothers in Ethiopia, providing hope and strength," Miller added.

'The seed of revival has been sown.' *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Three women share thoughts in a small prayer cluster at the Prayer Summit sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions' Home Ministries department on Oct. 25-26. "We're looking for revival outside, but a revival will begin inside," said Wellington Boone, the speaker for the summit who is well-known for his involvement with Promise Keepers. "The seed of revival has already been sown. The baby is growing in the womb of your spirit. Now it's time to travail, like a woman in labor. Push! Pray until something happens!" Boone urged the 600 participants gathered at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School.

The weekend included times of individual and corporate prayer, and many participants chose to fast during the lunch hour. Each fall, Home Ministries sponsors an event to assist established congregations in evangelism.—*Carol Wert*

Christmas Sharing Fund benefits storm relief, education, and translation

Elkhart, Ind. (MCGB)—Contributions to the Christmas Sharing Fund of the Mennonite Church General Board (MCGB) will benefit storm and disaster relief in Puerto Rico, facilitate racial and ethnic leadership education, and subsidize Jubilee curriculum translation.

The year-end giving project annually focuses the Mennonite Church's attention on special needs at home and abroad.

- ***Rebuilding.*** Fifty percent of the Christmas Sharing Fund proceeds will be used to rebuild three homes in the Aibonito-Coamo area of Puerto Rico under auspices of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), said George B. Stoltzfus, general secretary of the MCGB. The three houses were damaged by Hurricane Hortense in mid-September.
- ***Leadership education.*** Stoltzfus indicated that 25 percent of the fund will assist in leadership education for students from congregations representing the Mennonite Church's associate groups, along with a portion to other racial and ethnic groups.
- ***Translation.*** Another 25 percent of fund donations will help to finance a Spanish translation of the recently released children's Sunday school curriculum, *Jubilee: God's Good News*. Everett Thomas, executive secretary of Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, pointed out that Hispanic Mennonite Convention cannot bear the total cost of translating the series. The Christmas Sharing Fund subsidy will help ensure that materials can be sold below cost, according to Thomas.

Congregations can take special offerings for the fund or individuals can send contributions directly to the MCGB, according to Stoltzfus. Sunday school classes and small groups are also encouraged to adopt these projects. Checks made payable to Christmas Sharing Fund can be sent to Mennonite Church General Board, Suite 600, 421 S. Second St., Elkhart, IN 46516 or to Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

—*Jane Halteman*

Crises in Liberia and North America illustrate move of God's Spirit, leaders say

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM)—The ongoing civil war in Liberia and the crumbling of Western church institutions look like tremendous crises.

But on Oct. 17, two church leaders described how they saw the movement of God's spirit in both instances. Jasper S. Ndaborlor, a former chaplain to Liberia's legislature, and George R. Hunsberger, general coordinator of the Gospel and Our Culture Network, spoke to about 100 people, including local pastors and community residents, during the opening session of the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) board of directors meeting.

"Even before the beginning of the war, Jesus has been with us," said Ndaborlor, president of the United Christian Association of Liberia (UCAL) and pastor of the 550-member Monrovia Free Pentecostal Church. "He has been with us in the war, he is still with us, and I am sure he will continue to be with us."

'God protected me.' Ndaborlor, whose life was spared in 1990 when three people next to him in a firing-squad line were executed, recounted how God walked with him again this year when "I was hunted like an animal for preaching the truth. Surely, God protected me from the hands of these people," he said.

Ndaborlor also praised MBM, which works with UCAL to train church leaders in Liberia. "When people were leaving the country, I saw MBM coming in. It gave me courage and the hope that there are people of God around the world who are concerned about us and our national climate," he said.

In August, Ndaborlor began two years of study at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He is preparing to return to Liberia along with Samuel G. Doe, another Liberian who is studying at Eastern Mennonite University. Both men receive financial support for their training from MBM and others. "We intend to go back and establish programs that will help bring peace and maintain peace in this country," Ndaborlor said. "I think the church has a greater role to play in this modern world."

When it comes to the church in North America, Hunsberger described a massive shift that has moved religious bodies to the sidelines of cultural life. The author of *The Church Between Gospel and Culture* encouraged congregations to structure life around being a "sent community" instead of a vendor of services. "I am really tired of doing church. I am really hungry to be church," said Hunsberger.

Hunsberger suggested that Anabaptists have much to contribute to this kind of restructuring of the church's role in society. "You are no strangers to a world of diverse cultures. . . . You bring to the whole church . . . a basis in experience for helping to appreciate and navigate the insights in that culture."

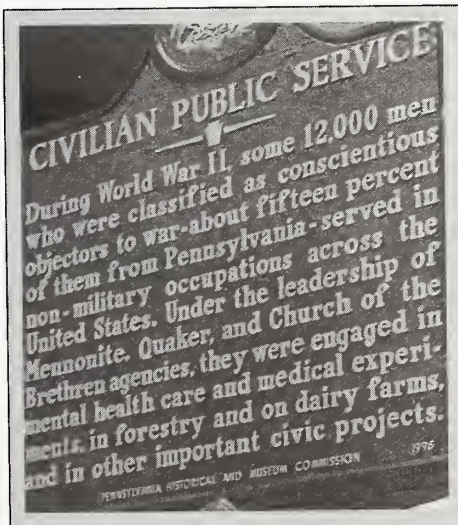
—Tom Price

Mennonite-related insurance companies merge

New Holland, Pa.—Four Mennonite-related mutual insurance companies in Pennsylvania merged on Oct. 1.

The four merged companies are Franconia Mennonite Aid Plan of Harleysville, Mennonite Mutual Insurance Association of Intercourse, Tri-County Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company of Gap, and Goodville Mutual Casualty Company of New Holland.

"We will be able to reduce expenditures, provide a more complete set of products, and be more competitive over the long term," says Herman Bontrager, president of the newly-formed Goodville Mutual Casualty Company. The merger provided continued employment to all employees of the four merged companies with Goodville Mutual or with an agency servicing the company. The company is based in New Holland and serves policyholders through independent agents in nine states. Goodville Mutual participates in a reinsurance pool with 16 other companies that are members of the Association of Mennonite Aid Societies.



New marker recognizes CPS workers. *Philadelphia, Pa.*—A Pennsylvania historical marker recently erected here recognizes the conscientious objectors to war who served in Civilian Public Service (CPS) during World War II. More than 12,000 Mennonites, Quaker, Brethren, Methodists, and others served in CPS after the 1940 draft until 1947.

The marker was unveiled on Oct. 26 at the Friends Center, 1501 Cherry Street, in a dedication service planned by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), one of the agencies involved in the conception and administration of CPS. Former CPS participants, including Mennonites, attended the event.—*AFSC*

Two churches leave Indiana-Michigan

Goshen, Ind.—Two congregations in the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference have announced plans to leave the conference.

In separate communications, Bourbon (Ind.) Chapel and Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind., have informed the conference executive committee of their plans.

A letter from the Bourbon board of elders refers to the issue of homosexuality as a catalyst but not as their primary reason for leaving. "Our primary concern is one of leadership," the letter states. In looking at leadership issues, it reads, "it became apparent that [Mennonite] leadership structure was much different than that apparent in the Bible."

Bourbon Chapel recently held a service recognizing the end of its association with the conference and the Mennonite Church. The same service celebrated the beginning of an independent congregation under the name, New Wine Church.

The letter from Maple Grove cites leadership issues and "alarm at the continual call for 'dialogue' and 'diversity' concerning pertinent issues." The congregation plans to end its relationship with the conference effective Dec. 31.—*Gospel Evangel*

- **Yordy named provost.** John D. Yordy has been named provost of Goshen (Ind.) College. A member of the faculty since 1977, Yordy is currently chair of the chemistry department. The provost oversees the offices of academic dean and dean of students, assures sound budgeting and strategic-planning processes, and serves as chief executive officer of the college in the absence of the president.

- **Mennonite to Congress.** Jerry Moran, a Republican from Hays, Kan., and a member of a Mennonite Brethren congregation, won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives on Nov. 5. The last Mennonite to serve in Congress was Edward Clayton Eicher, a Democrat from Iowa in 1932-38. Moran says he supports the Peace Tax Fund bill which allows conscientious objectors to redirect war taxes for other purposes but opposes major cuts to the military budget.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

- **Christmas project planned.** Some 100 Mennonite Church congregations are participating in a Christmas project of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) as of Nov. 6. Through bulletin inserts, MBM is encouraging members to make donations in the names of family and friends to MBM's support of a Beninese theological education program. MBM will send a Christmas card to each person listed, noting the gift in their name to MBM. More information is available from Carol Norr at 219 294-7523.

- **Youth Stewards named.** Two North Americans will be among a group of young adults from each of the five continents represented at India 1997, the Mennonite World Conference assembly. Stefanie Jones, Hesston, Kan., and Matthew Eberly, Scottdale, Pa., will join the other Youth Stewards in Calcutta in mid-December. The Youth Stewards will help to plan, set up, and carry out the Global Church Village exhibit at the assembly.

- **Orlando airlines named.** The official airlines for the Orlando 97 assembly of the Mennonite Church are USAir and Delta Airlines. Participants can book their tickets at their preferred travel agency by mentioning Gold File number 81190030 with USAir and file number XQ170 with Delta. A 5 percent discount off any published fare is available. The dates of the youth and adult conventions are July 29-Aug. 2, 1997.—*Mennonite Church General Board*

- **Resource people available.** The Hispanic Mennonite Convention (HMC) and the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries have identified 18 resource people in evangelism, Anabaptist leadership training, family life, and Christian education training available to Spanish-speaking congregations. More information about the program is available from Samuel Lopez at the HMC office at 717 354-6524.—*MBCM*

- **Mental health meeting held.** Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) and Mennonite Health Services (MHS) sponsored an October conference in Syracuse, Ind., to review MMA's mental health underwriting practices and how they might be revised to better fit the needs of those with mental illness. The result was an initial draft on more detailed underwriting guidelines for mental health conditions. —*MMA*

- **Peace bill at White House.** A White House official met with Peace Tax Fund Bill lobbyists on Nov. 20 for an hour-long discussion on conscientious objection to taxes for military use today. Campaign executive director Marian Franz led a delegation of seven people representing various religious organizations that met with a member of the White House Counsel's Office. Participants described the discussion as a good first step toward their goal of providing citizens a way to pay taxes without violating beliefs about conscience and war.—*NCPTF*

- **Students study UN's role.** Students from Mennonite colleges and universities in the United States and Canada recently attended a three-day seminar titled "Walking the Bridge: A Look at the United Nations Peacebuilding and Development Work from a Mennonite Perspective." Sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee United Nations office in New York City, the seminar's key theme was the role of Christians in relating to powerful institutions and in promoting forgiveness.—*MCC*

- **COE executive resigns.** Norma J. Johnson, Newton, Kan., executive secretary for the Commission on Education (COE) and publisher of Faith & Life Press of the General Conference Mennonite Church, has resigned effective Jan. 31, 1997. She begins as pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, on March 1, 1997.—*GCMC news service*

- **Hymnals wanted.** Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City, Ohio, wants approximately 110 copies of the *Mennonite Hymnal* (1969 edition) and 70 copies of *Life Songs #2*. Contact Howard Schmitt at 614 873-8290.

- **New appointments:**

Susan W. Browning, director of financial assistance, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Gilberto Flores, director, Hispanic Resources Ministry, Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Corbin Graber, program director, Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich.

Renee Leap, assistant director of financial assistance, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Jerry Markus, executive director, Williamsburg (Va.) Christian Retreat Center.

- **Coming events:**

125-year celebration, Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa, June 28-29, 1997.

100-year anniversary celebration, Manson (Iowa) Mennonite Church, Aug. 29-31, 1997. More information is available from Curt Kuhns at 712 469-3387.

- **New books:**

Crooked Tree, written by Esther Bender and illustrated by Edna Bender, is a picture storybook of the life of an oak tree. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

- **New resources:**

Building Communities of Faith, a new missions video from Mennonite Board of Missions, highlights conflict mediation, training of church leaders, health and development work, cross-cultural experiences, and changes in the global church. Includes stories from England, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Benin, and China. Suitable for Sunday school classes,

Art director

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking an innovative, high-level art director to work within a creative team of professionals to support a variety of corporate communications needs. This individual will work with various internal clients to define and understand project objectives. The art director will also participate in creative brainstorming, concepting, design, and print preparation. Qualified applicants will have at least three years of desktop publishing experience, be proficient with Quark, Illustrator, and PhotoShop. A bachelor or technical degree in art or graphic design, or at least six years of full-time graphic design experience is required.

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Handbook on advocacy, prepared by the Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office, is designed to assist Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in witness to the government. The 11-page handbook includes an explanation of the biblical basis and Anabaptist approach to advocacy. Available from 202 544-6564.

An Inside Look, a video available from Eastern Mennonite University, introduces the campus and its programs to prospective students. Available from 800 368-2665.

Trek is a four-week study and reflection guide exploring the question of "What is enough?" Designed to help individuals and groups struggling with too little time for relationships and too many material goods, *Trek* includes daily readings, discussion questions, suggested activities, and a wall poster. Available free from local Mennonite Central Committee offices.

• **Job openings:**

Assistant principal, Penn View Christian School, Souderton, Pa. Full-time responsibilities include oversight of middle school program. Qualifications include teaching and administrative experience with an advanced degree. Position opens summer of 1997. More information is available from 215 723-1196.

Business teacher, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. Long-term substitute position runs from mid-March 1997 until the end of the school year. Contact J. Richard Thomas at 717 299-0436.

Faculty position in mathematics, Hesston (Kan.) College. Full-time opening begins fall of 1997. Teaching experience required, doctorate preferred. Send résumé and list of three references to Paul Keim, academic dean, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062.

Houseparents, Merimna residential care home of Mennonite Disabilities Committee, Goshen, Ind. Responsibilities include living with three developmentally disabled adults. Room and board, small monthly stipend, and ongoing training provided. Most caregivers have employment outside the home as well. Positions begin Jan. 1. More information is available from Gina Leichty Wireman at 219 533-9720.

Librarian, Bluffton (Ohio) College. Full-time responsibilities include coordination of the collections, budgeting, and staffing, representing library matters to the administration, and advancing the use of technology. Graduate degree from an ALA-accredited program required; doctorate preferred. Begins August 1997. Submit letter of application, résumé or vita, three letters of reference, and unofficial transcripts to Amy M. Tabler, Bluffton College, 280 West College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817-1196.

President, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University. Responsibilities include developing and executing plans and policies for operations, academics, and student life programs. Qualifications include experience in administration, market analysis, and policymaking. Terminal degree in an academic discipline preferred. Nominations, applications, and inquiries should be sent to Ted Nickel, Administrative Officer, Presidential Search Committee, 7081 N. Marks, Box 206, Fresno, CA 93711.

Voluntary service position, International Guest House, Washington, D.C. Single person for one-year assignment, beginning in mid-May 1997. Sponsored by Allegheny Mennonite Conference. More information is available from 202 726-5808.

• **Change of address:**

Barbara and Ralph Reinford, PO Box 59, Kidron, OH 44636.

NEW MEMBERS

Assembly, Goshen, Ind.: Cheri Krause.

Berkey Avenue, Goshen, Ind.: Doug Baker, Cindy Warner Baker, Sherry Wenger, Curt Wenger, Tracy Thorne, and Timothy Thorne.

Community, Hagerstown, Md.: Irvin Martin, Damon Martin, Traci Martin, Minnie Routzan, Clare-Marie Dentu, Mary Hess, Judy Weaver, and Linda Hunsecker.

Community Mennonite Fellowship, Moorefield, Ont.: Dave Metcalfe, Robin Metcalfe, and Alicia Metcalfe.

Erb Street, Waterloo, Ont.: Pam Schlueter, Jeff Schlueter, James Wideman, Sharon Lee Wideman, and Cynthia Wideman.

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First, Middlebury, Ind.: Linford and Elaine Horner Martin.

First of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.: Pamela Lehman and Sheila Kirk.

Gulfhaven, Gulfport, Miss.: Bobby Barnett, Jshonda Barnett, Tanya Arkwright, Carrie Geil, Michael McPherson, Sammie Herring, Judy Herring, Adrian Liberato, and David Geil.

Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: Kevin and Pam Misch.

Kern Road, South Bend, Ind.: Harold, Ruth, and Benjamin Yoder.

Midway, Columbiana, Ohio: Brian Martin, David Rohrer, Sam Wenger, Charity Wenger, Zachary Witmer, Melody Huffman, Mike Martin, Angela Williams, Jennifer Yoder, Mary Huebert, Amanda Lamb, Justin Howell, and Dustin Bresin.

Neffsville, Lancaster, Pa.: Millie Beiler, Colleen Brubaker, Ken and Pam Fisher, Marlin Hess, Bob Kreider, Bob and Dora McAlpin, Tom Morton, Roland and Eileen Myers, Clair and Nancy Sauder, Michael Sauder, Dean Smith, Katie Snider, Brent and Theresa Stoltzfus, and Bonnie Zehr.

North Clinton, Wauseon, Ohio: Sheryl Nofziger, Michael Hoschak, Chris Lee, and Char Lee.

Oak Grove, Smithville, Ohio: Wayne Nitzsche and Mary Nitzsche.

Pueblo, Colo.: Patti Darling.

Wooster, Ohio: Ralph, Barbara, and Joshua Reinford.

BIRTHS

Aeschliman, Margaret Fisher and Jeff, Salem, Ore., Spencer Jeffrey (first child), Nov. 1.

Bontrager, Janet Clawson and Keith, Syracuse, Ind., Clay Michael (third child), Nov. 6.

Bontrager, Debra Troyer and Merv, Smithville, Ohio, Weston John (second child), Oct. 20.

Bontreger, Nancy Grenert and Mike, Elkhart, Ind., Leah Jo (third child), Nov. 8.

Drummond, Angela Hochstetler and Andrew, Millersburg, Ind., Adrian Connor (first child), Nov. 3.

Ewert, Renee Roth and Jon, Halstead, Kan., Titus William (second child), Nov. 9.

Headings, Karla Yutzy and Leland, Hutchinson, Kan., Nicole Elizabeth (first child), Nov. 8.

Massaro, Kristen Estrada and Steve, Orrville, Ohio, Tara Nicole (second child), Oct. 22.

Maust, Grace Su and James, Kaohsiung City, Taiwan, Grace Felicity (first child), Nov. 4.

Miller, Gloria Miller and Bruce, White Pigeon, Mich., Abigail Mae (first child), Oct. 5.

Miller, Lori Woolridge and Lyle, Wellman, Iowa, Kaycee Lee (third child), Oct. 19.

Workers train for outreach. *Baltimore, Md. (EMM)*—Thirty-one young adults are currently part of six Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams training for three months at the Baltimore Discipleship Center. They will complete training on Dec. 12. One team will serve four months in the republic of Singapore, and five teams will serve eight months in the countries of Albania, Germany, Taiwan, Trinidad and the United States (Fort Wayne, Ind.). YES is administered by the Disciple Ministries department of Eastern Mennonite Missions.

Front row on floor, (left to right): Beth Kong (Fort Wayne), Adam Carter (Trinidad), Lincoln Nafziger (Singapore), Gwen Musser and Beth Witmer (Fort Wayne), Wesley Brasher (Germany), and Tricia Peters (Trinidad).

Second row: Sonya Harnish (Albania), Roger Martin (Trinidad), Beth Hollinger (Germany), Regina Fritz (Albania), Erma Miller (Singapore), Rodney Martin (Taiwan—team leader), Emma Stutzman (Taiwan), and Philip Weldy (Trinidad—team leader).

Third row: Janna Buckwalter (Germany), Lisa Wilson (Albania), Heidi Hochstedler (Singapore—team leader), Terese Hammer and Rachel Norton (Taiwan), Julie Martin (Fort Wayne), Lori Carper (Trinidad), Kendra Musser (Albania—team co-leader), and Hideat Tewolde (Fort Wayne—team leader).

Back row: Lew Martin (Fort Wayne), Matt Carlson (Germany—team leader), Darvin Eby (Singapore), Curt Zeager (Taiwan), Donovan Giesbrecht (Albania), Johannes Schmidt (Fort Wayne), and Dwayne Musser (Albania—team co-leader).

Miller, Tina Otto and Todd, Hartville, Ohio, Jacob Kyle (second child), Oct. 26.

Richardson, Cyndi Friesen and Paul, Los Angeles, Calif., Katarina Skye, (first child), Oct. 8.

Rittenhouse, Janelle Hartman and John, Telford, Pa., Rachel Elizabeth (first child), Nov. 7.

Roth, Cheryl Bodeen and Jered, Lincoln, Neb., Merissa Ashlyn (first child), Nov. 6.

Rumbold, Julie McFee and Alan, Benson, Ill., Michalah Rebecca (first child), Oct. 2.

Shore, Joylynn and Toby, Telford, Pa., Kylie Sera (second child), Oct. 18.

Short, Alysa Frey and Chris, Archbold, Ohio, Carly Noel (first child), Nov. 13.

Smith, Jennifer Lehman and Tracy, Waynesboro, Va., Levi Benjamin (first child), Oct. 25.

Sommers, Sherry and Steve, Hartville, Ohio, Robin Sierra (second child), Oct. 1.

Thorne, Tracy Kepler and Timothy, Goshen, Ind., Abraham Everett (third child), Sept. 3.

Wenger, Kristina Garrett and Timm, Lancaster, Pa., Katia Lynn (first child), Oct. 6.

Wenger, Andrea Horn and Cary, Mt. Dora, Fla., Sydney Celeste (first child), Oct. 26.

Widmer, Lisa and Brad, Parnell, Iowa, Jacob Benjamin (third child), Oct. 15.

Wittmer, Trishea Yoder and Shawn, Uniontown, Ohio, Hunter Allen (first child), Oct. 14.

Yoder, Robin Lubinski and Lee, Indianapolis, Ind., Cara Nichole (first child), Nov. 9.

Zook, Cristin Byler and Darrin, Belleville, Pa., Rachel Renee (second child), Nov. 12.

MARRIAGES

Beck-Kosinski: Gary Beck, Archbold, Ohio (Zion), and Pat Kosinski, Nov. 15, by Ron Guengerich and Dee Swartz.

Bennett-Stauffer: Nichole Bennett, Milford, Neb. (United Methodist), and Dan Stauffer, Milford, Neb. (Bellwood), Nov. 9, by Noah Kolb.

Erb-Miller: Shawn Erb, Lititz, Pa. (Neffsville), and Jill Miller, Lititz, Pa. (Middle Creek), Oct. 26, by Linford King.

Kurtz-Murch: Jennifer Kurtz, Keyser, W.Va. (Pinto), and John Murch, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 24, by Jane Hoober Peifer.

Lee-Myers: James Franklin Lee, Indianapolis, Ind., and Shane Renee Myers, Morocco, Ind. (Burr Oak), Oct. 26, by Philip D. Leichty.

McVay-Stutzman: Amanda McVay, Wooster, Ohio, and Brad Stutzman, Wooster, Ohio (Oak Grove), Aug. 31.

Nyce-Yoder: Bonnie L. Nyce, Harrisonburg, Va. (Cornerstone), and Lawrence R. Yoder, McGaheysville, Va. (Cornerstone), Sept. 21, by Orie Wenger.

Shaw-Yoder: Darren Shaw, Oakville, Ont. (Upper Oak Community), and Jennifer Yoder, Sarasota, Fla. (Bahia Vista), Oct. 19, by Dale Shaw.

Stichter-Yoder: Frank Stichter, Wakarusa, Ind. (Yellow Creek), and Becky Yoder, Goshen, Ind. (Olive), Oct. 26, by Wesley J. Bontreger.

DEATHS

Alderfer, Marie N. Derstine, 89, Souderton, Pa. Born: Dec. 22, 1906, Telford, Pa., to Jonas and Stella Nyce Derstine. Died: Nov. 5, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—children: Geraldine Lapp, Evelyn Godshall, Nancy Mininger, Donna Marie Derstine, Curtis D., Gordon D.; brothers and sisters: Paul, Claude, Linford, and Stanley Derstine, Grace Godshall, Joy Harris; 18 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ralph A. Alderfer (husband) and James D. (son). Funeral: Nov. 10, Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel, by David Greiser and Gerald Clemmer. Burial: Souderton Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Brubaker, Roy Musser, 90, Cocolamus, Pa. Born: Jan. 22, 1906, McAlisterville, Pa., to Ammon G. and Annie Musser Brubaker. Died: Nov. 5, 1996, Richfield, Pa. Survivors—children: Miriam Kauffman, Doris Martin, Naomi, Arlene Gehman, Thelma Diem, Roy L., Dale; 27 grandchildren, 64 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Elva Auker Brubaker (wife) and Anna (daughter). Funeral and burial: Nov. 9, Delaware Mennonite Church, by Carl Graybill, David Weaver, and Stanley Wine.

Dick, Abram Peter, 92, Lakewood, Colo. Born: March 4, 1904, Landskron, Russia. Died: Oct. 17, 1996, Lakewood, Colo., of a heart attack. Survivors—son: Vernon Dick; sisters: Anne Willems, Katie Wilke; 5 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Petronella Camijn (wife). Funeral: Oct. 22, Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, by Mark Miller. Burial: Crown Hill.

Kohler, Nora Emma Hartzler, 96, Smithville, Ohio. Born: April 11, 1900, Orrville, Ohio, to Albert I. and Amanda Burkholder Hartzler. Died: Oct. 18, Seville, Ohio. Survivors—children: Marjorie Battig, Glenn Smucker; sisters: Elida Beer, Della Burkholder; 7 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Pre-

deceased by: William Kohler (second husband) and Melvin P. Smucker (first husband). Funeral and burial: Oct. 21, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, by Norma Duerksen.

Lehman, Sarah E. Zuercher, 95, Kidron, Ohio. Born: March 25, 1901, Kidron, Ohio, to Christ and Rebecca Zimmerly Zuercher. Died: Nov. 2, 1996, Orrville, Ohio. Survivors—children: Diane Callen, James; 4 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Amos C. Lehman (husband). Funeral and burial: Nov. 5, Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, by Michael Amstutz and Richard Ross.

Linder, Anna Rebecca King, 91, West Liberty, Ohio. Born: July 18, 1905, Elkhart, Ind., to Chauncey and Nanny Yoder King. Died: Nov. 3, 1996, Garden City, Mo. Survivors—daughter: Lorna Jane Longenecker; brother and sisters: John King, Alta Plank, Verda Kanagy, Golda King; 3 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Lawrence Linder (husband). Funeral: Nov. 9, South Union Mennonite Church, by Randy Reminder and Stanley Shenk. Burial: Highland Cemetery.

Moyer, John H. Sr., 71, Souderton, Pa. Born: July 7, 1925, Franconia Twp., Pa., to John D. and Anna C. Halteman Moyer. Died: Nov. 7, 1996, Sellersville, Pa. Survivors—wife: Sylvia F. Hackman Moyer; children: Linda H. Quinty, John Jr.; brother and sister: Raymond H., Eva H.; 5 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Dale H. Moyer (infant son). Funeral and burial: Nov. 11, Franconia Mennonite Church, by John M. Ehst, Steven E. Landis, and Floyd M. Hackman.

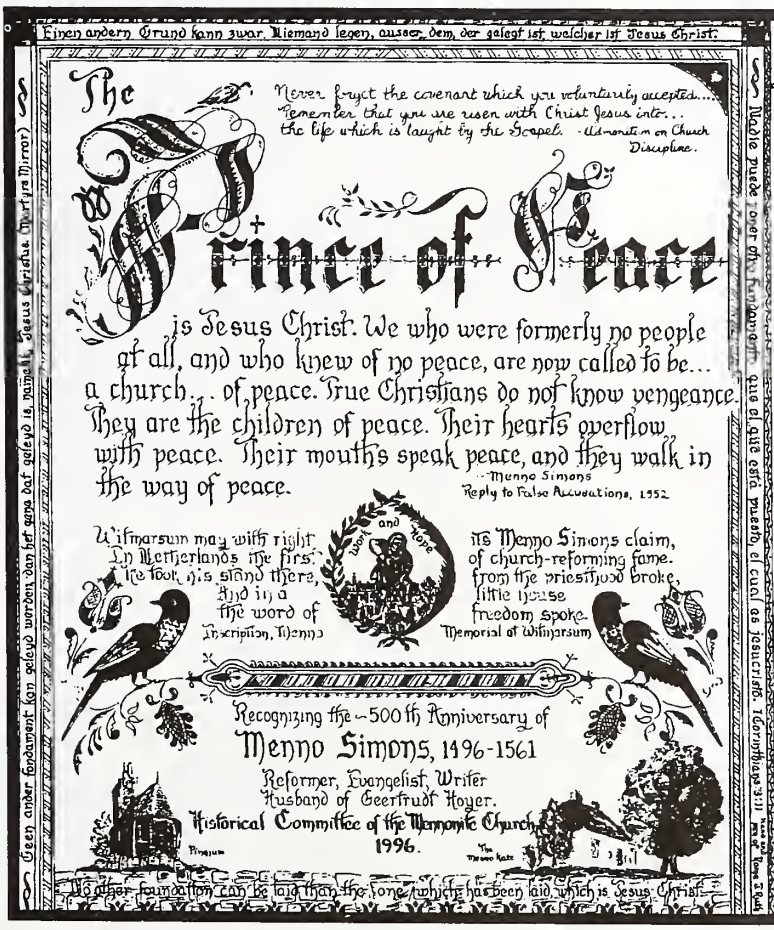
Moyer, Sarah L. Longacre, 80, Lederach, Pa. Born: April 6, 1916, Spring City, Pa., to Isaac K. and Mary Ada Kolb Longacre. Died: Nov. 6, 1996, Sellersville, Pa., of bone cancer. Survivors—husband: David Edwin Moyer; children: Beula Arlene Peele, Rhoda Moyer Searcy, David W., Daniel Edwin, Ruth Elizabeth Kauffman; brother: Daniel Longacre; 12 grandchildren, one great-grandchild, 2 step-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 9, Salford Mennonite Church, by Richard Lewman, Royden Landes, and Larry Bergey.

Roth, Ezra, 89, Seward, Neb. Born: Oct. 1, 1907, Milford, Neb., to Benjamin and Barbara Ulrich Roth. Died: Nov. 6, 1996, Seward, Neb. Survivors—wife: Susan Marner Roth; children: Clifford, Lonnie, Doretta Schweitzer, Imagene Burkey, Julie Hafer; sisters: Mabel Erb, Ester Roth; 21 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Mattie Eicher Roth (first wife) and Kenneth (son). Funeral: Nov. 11, Bellwood Mennonite Church, by Marlin Kym. Burial: East Fairview Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Wolgemuth, Mae Brubaker, 95, Mount Joy, Pa. Born: Feb. 4, 1901, Rapho Twp., Pa., to Clayton S. and Maria Whitmoyer Brubaker. Died: Nov. 6, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—children: J. Lloyd, John H., Jean W. Breneman, Thelma B., Lois, Lonnie W.; 14 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: John Keener Wolgemuth (husband). Funeral: Nov. 10, Mount Joy Mennonite Church, by Joe N. Sherer and Herb Wolgemuth. Burial: Kraybill Mennonite Cemetery.

Yoder, Dorothy Stutzman, 86, Hesston, Kan. Born: Oct. 9, 1910, Brandon, Colo., to Andrew and Fanny Stutzman. Died: Nov.10, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—sons: Don, Kenneth; sister: Ruth Miller; 2 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Francis Yoder (husband). Congregational membership: Hesston Mennonite Church. Funeral: Nov. 14, Schowalter Villa, by David Mann and Cheryl Hershberger. Burial: Crystal Springs Cemetery.

Obituary correction: Emma King Erisman's (Nov. 5, 1996, *Gospel Herald*) surviving son's name is Harry.



Give Peace this Christmas

Menno Simons Commemorative Fraktur

and support the work of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church.

Celebrate the season of peace by remembering the Anabaptist dedication to peace. Commissioned by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, this beautiful four-color fraktur commemorates the birth of Menno Simons 500 years ago. Artist Roma J. Ruth created this memento of Menno's life and ministry from a text chosen by John L. Ruth.

This 15" x 18" fraktur is signed and numbered by the artist, and is ready for framing. Gift cards can be ordered.

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Good news from the fringes

"God's kingdom is not something we build. God's kingdom has always been there. When we are converted, we become aware of it. We begin to see its signs, and we set about to embody it so that others, too, can see it and take hope."
—Walter Klaassen

Juana laces her fingers together and presses one thumb against the other as she speaks. Sitting below a window flung open to the rising Nicaraguan mountains, she is an exile in this town, having come here to care for her grandchildren, whose fathers were killed in the country's civil war. She worked in health concerns as a Catholic lay leader in her hometown before fleeing from the violence that had killed 33 of her co-workers.

Looking at her feet crossed under her chair, Juana obviously doesn't want to talk about the war that brought her here. But she does lift her head when asked why she got involved in church work—and why she stayed in it even when it endangered her life. In visiting families in her role with the church, Juana says she was often astounded by the hunger and suffering of her neighbors and their children.

"That's when I began waking up," she says simply. "When I became closer to God, then I became closer to my people."

Closer to God, closer to people; the refrain sounded strangely familiar to me as I talked with Juana during a recent trip to Central America. That's because it's one I've heard often among Mennonites; we believe that Jesus' directive to love our neighbor leads us closer to both the Creator and the created. We interpret God and God's actions within our communities, with our people.

Juana's version, however, could more accurately be labeled liberation theology than Anabaptism. The term disturbs many in the North, including Mennonites, who assume necessary connections to Marxist ideologies, violent activities, and materialist priorities.

Some versions of liberation theology have no doubt been used as political weapons of violent revolution and to bolster faith that speaks only to material needs. Yet no theology is safe from misuse in the hands of unreflective people. For example, the "God-loves-me-so-God-wants-me-to-have-it-all" theology that steers much of North American Christianity is a sadly (and dangerously) maligned version of the biblical truth that God is love.

A theology of liberation in Latin America finds its most essential expression among people who have never heard of the term—like the people in Juana's home village. For these people, it means reading in the Bible about a God born at the fringes—a place that they know all too well. For them, it means that Christ with a bleeding side suffers too as they watch their skinny babies die and their toddlers' hair turn red from malnutrition. It means seeing Jesus—who in Latin America is often shown as a limp, cross-bound corpse—resurrected and proclaiming good news in the middle of the often bad news of their lives.

For those on the edges, then, Christianity is rooted in their experiences of poverty and can give them "a transformative rather than a fatalistic stance toward the world," as Phillip Berryman writes in his book *Liberation Theology*. In its purest form, he says, a theology of liberation "is a systematic, disciplined reflection on Christian faith and its implications." These implications, like transformation and action, can't be fastened down by words or paragraphs—or an editorial for that matter—because they dwell in the living, dynamic world rather than in a static alphabet.

When any theology offers false promises of building a utopia or the belief that food alone can satisfy souls, the theology fails. But when it helps people raise their heads in God-given dignity even while they're being treated like animals, and when it gives them sustaining hope because it makes visible the signs of God's reign—then this understanding of the gospel offers a liberating truth indeed.

Christ's "glad tidings to the poor" (Luke 4:18) don't mean that we who are rich somehow take second-place in God's heart. But the good news offers hope for our own faith, often shackled by mood and circumstance, as we see God's reign embodied by those who by all earthly measures have no reason to hope. And it may mean that as we "wake up" like Juana, again and again, we will feel the warm skin of God next to our own.—*vsw*

December 17, 1996

"Praise be to God . . . who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort flows" (2 Cor. 1:3-5).

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Michael Chandler:
Joseph can teach us a great deal more than about carpentry 6

Betsy Headrick McCrae:
'At least I do what I say I will do' 8

Mennonite urban leaders meet for support 9

The congregation as Christ-bearers:

Being comforted by those who suffered before us

In a congregation in which we have no blood ties, among a people we have known fewer than four years, we were sustained by the God of all compassion.

by Ann Graham Price and Tom Price

We named him Christopher, a Greek word meaning "Christ-bearer," because we had hoped he would carry Christ throughout his life. Instead, a fatal condition meant that Christ carried our tiny son through his 21 brief minutes on earth. And, as we face a lifetime of unfulfilled hopes for our son, we have found that Christ has borne us through with the support of the people at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind., who have brought us healing born of their own wounds and brokenness.

"Tom and Ann, now you are among a group of parents of very special babies," said pastor David Sutter at Christopher's memorial service, his voice quivering and his words punctuated by long silences as he struggled to maintain composure. "There are others who have traveled this very painful journey as well. For on the death of our own premature child, now almost seven years ago, I was truly amazed at how deep . . . the pain was and even still is for the one that I hardly knew and whose life was very short."

David spoke about losing his own son, Timo-

Gone forever is the image of God as one who pulls strings to make everything come out all right. In its place is the image of a God who stays at our side.

thy Christian Sutter, born perfectly healthy in November 1989 but, at six months, too early for the medical technology of the time to save him. His parents, David and Janice Sutter, had newly arrived as co-pastors for the congregation. He lived for two days. They now have two living sons: Ben, 5 and Brian 2.

Because of tests taken after a traffic accident, we already knew our son's congenital condition doomed him to a short life. We shared that sad news with the Kern Road congregation. Then Christopher was born 11 weeks prematurely on Aug. 18. At 1 pound, 8.2 ounces and only 12 inches long, Christopher was tiny and fragile and clearly destined not to be with us for long. Yet, with all the things we knew were wrong, he was still perfect in our eyes.

Christopher Price on the day of his birth—and death. He clutches the finger of his sister Katie, whose hand is held by their father, Tom.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. . . . All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. —Psalm 139:13-14, 16.

Did the Creator err? Why didn't the Great Physician heal Christopher? Was the Omnipotent powerless? Did Providence allot our son only 21 minutes? Where was God when Christopher was in need?

Others in our congregation have wrestled with questions like these. Many couples have experienced miscarriages and stillbirths. Others care for disabled children. Another couple's teenage son died in an accident. One mother's child lives with the same heart defect that killed another of her children.

To us, it seemed both a miracle and a cruel irony that Christopher had made it even to 29 weeks. But we came to understand that perhaps God had chosen us to minister to the needs of Christopher, who had so little time to learn that he was fully human, created in God's image, and deeply loved. We had 21 glorious, excruciating minutes to give him a lifetime of love before he slipped away.

Gone forever, however, is the image of God as an all-powerful being who would pull the necessary strings to make everything come out all right. In its place is an image of God who has stayed by our sides—hurting with us, grieving with us, acknowledging our anger—but never once promising to fix everything. More important, we know this God is on the side of children like ours, whose lives are taken from them too soon for reasons we can't understand.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.—2 Corinthians 1:3-5

We are not members of Kern Road Mennonite Church, though we have attended regularly for about four years. In a

congregation where we have no blood ties, among a people we have known fewer than four years, we received the comfort Paul described to the church at Corinth.

In our experience with Christopher Michael, we have learned that the church, when it really is the church, gives grieving parents:

• ***Compassion.*** This Latin word literally means "to suffer together." We were greatly comforted by the many people who wept with us as our tragedy unfolded. Their tears for us were perhaps the most helpful balm they offered. One Sunday, Pastor Janice Sutter paused mid-sentence in a prayer for Christopher. For many long minutes, she was unable to continue as she fought back tears. Even people who barely knew us cried as we shared the sad and overwhelming news.

During the final hymn in one service, a woman sitting in the row ahead of us sang through the first verse, then closed her hymnal abruptly. In an instant she was at Ann's side, wrapping her in her arms and weeping, while the congregation continued to sing all around them. By the time the hymn was finished, several more women had surrounded Ann to hold her hands, to weep with her, many to share their own stories of loss.

• ***Prayer.*** Each week, our congregation's regular sharing times gave us a forum to share about Christopher and for others to grieve, pray, and hope with us. More significantly, the congregation repeatedly prayed, "Give us strength to know how to support them."

• ***Space.*** Not every congregation willingly gives people freedom to do what they need to do. Some need to vent their anger at God, who is big enough to take it. Others need distance for a while. Our pastors gave us the space to express our grief and love for Christopher through our creative talents, using our words as a framework for his memorial service, with music that had special meaning for us. We also treasured our pastors' repeated refrain, "spend time together," which we considered the most valuable advice we had during the insanity of the week following Christopher's death.

• ***Time.*** People stopped by the hospital and our home just to say they cared. Many brought bread. One friend prepared a week's worth of meals. Others telephoned, mailed cards, or brought flowers. "I'm not good with words, like you are," one elderly gentleman told Ann at Christopher's memorial service. "I don't know what to say."

"That's okay," Ann responded. "You're here."

• ***Meaning.*** Parents are not supposed to bury their children. In a time when we lamented the world's meaninglessness, our congregation—and particularly our pastors—helped us see Christopher's plight through God's eyes. Rather than trite lines about Christopher being "our angel in heaven," Pastor Janice Sutter described him as "God's messenger to us.

"What message has he brought us, this messenger from God?" she asked. "Christopher Michael has reminded us of the value of life, even the smallest life, even the shortest life. He has reminded us of the value of 29 weeks of nurture in the womb. He has reminded us of the value of even 21 minutes in a parent's loving embrace. Human life is precious. Christopher's life was of great value."

• ***Resources.*** A new participant in our congregation—a Catholic hospital chaplain with an Anabaptist vision—led a Sunday school series on making tough medical decisions as a community of faith. He became part of our sounding board, offering to get us whatever information we could not find ourselves. When we tried to find a tiny casket that reflected our desire for dignity and simplicity, our pastors mentioned a nearby funeral home that served the Amish community. As we faced tough decisions about the costs of funeral homes, visitation services, and hosting out-of-town relatives, our pastors told us, "You can have the visitation in our fellowship hall before the memorial service. The congregation will provide a meal." We also knew where we could receive other financial assistance, if it was needed.

• ***Sanctity of life*** and ***dignity in death.*** We see the polarization in the church, which too often upholds one of these principles to the exclusion of the other. All along the way, our congregation upheld our decision to choose life, whatever the result. At the same time, they supported us as we sought to avoid becoming tangled in webs of medical technology when all we really wanted to do was hold our dying son.

• ***Faith, hope, and love.*** In our crisis, we received great outpourings of love from many people—even some from those who have no

(continued on page 4)

For every couple whose congregation enfolds them with the love of Christ, there must be ten who suffer alone. We must now offer comfort and hope to them.

(continued from page 3)

faith. What they could not give us, however, was hope. Kern Road Mennonite Church gave us a gift by believing in our hope and proclaiming our faith in the resurrection of Jesus.

"Together we say, Christopher Michael is alive in Christ. He is at home with God. He is knowing God's presence now in a way we can't even imagine," Janice Sutter said. If a congregation separates compassion from this foundation, ultimately it leads to hopelessness and despair.

A week after our son died, a member of our congregation sent us the poem she had written. In a few lines, she wove together scenes and sounds from Christopher's graveside service, where a huge crowd scattered rose petals on his beautiful little wood coffin:

A tiny wood box
To hold the remains
Of our highest hopes
And our deepest pains.
—Ruth Herr

At some point we asked ourselves, "What would have happened to us had this experience happened in another congregation where we previously were members?" We already knew the answer. We would have been on our own.

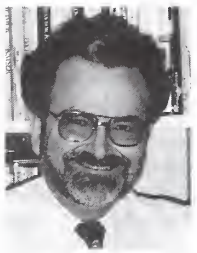
For every couple whose congregation enfolds them with the love of Christ, there must be 10 other couples who suffer alone, in silence. We need to let the comforts we have experienced through Christ flow over into the lives of others who are suffering.

It has become a joke with us that we still have enough bread in our freezer for a year's communions. Those loaves will long remind us that we are part of one body, which suffers with us when we suffer. We forever will bear scars that remind us of the son whose eyes we never saw. But through our brokenness and being comforted by those who suffered before us—particularly through Christ's community as we have experienced it in our congregation—we pray that one day we will offer comfort and hope to others.

Ann Graham Price is a writer and communications consultant who also works as an adjunct professor at Indiana University South Bend. Tom Price, former religion editor at The Elkhart Truth, *Elkhart, Ind., directs corporate communications for Mennonite Board of Missions. They live in South Bend, Ind., with their four-year-old daughter, Katie.*

***Bring good news to the oppressed, . . . bind up the brokenhearted, . . . proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; . . . proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God.*—Isaiah 61:1b-2, NRSV**

Gospel Herald



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I disagree with what Charlie Kraybill says in his letter (Nov. 26) on two counts:

1. Nowhere in his article, ***Replacing "Did You Win?" with "How Did You Play?"*** (Nov. 5) did Doug Hochstetler write that Mennonite high school and college teams "pray for victory in the locker room." These teams often do, however, pray for the mental and physical well-being of the players from both teams. They also pray for a spirit of cooperation and good sportsmanship.

2. Eliminating all competitive athletic programs from our Mennonite schools would be a grave mistake. It is in the context of competitive sports that we may teach the values of fairness, cooperation, hard work, perseverance, positive mental attitudes, sportsmanship, respect for persons and property, and character—among many other values.

Indeed, these values are also necessary ingredients in our efforts to do kingdom work in our world today.

Keith Springer
Saybrook, Ill.

What's in a Name? (Nov. 26). The most favored name at a recent meeting of the Mennonite Church General Board was "Mennonite Church." This is a poor choice for two reasons: (1) It implies absorption rather than integration; (2) It implies that we are the only or most representative Mennonite denomination in the world.

The second most favored name in that straw vote was "Mennonite Church General Conference." The strength of this name is that it literally integrates the names of the two merging denominations. Its weakness is that it's clumsy and has ambiguous meaning.

I was surprised that no one voted for "Conference of Mennonite Churches"—a far more accurate and descriptive name. I'm also surprised that some object to the geographical reference in "Mennonite Church North America." We are, after all, an affiliation of Mennonite churches in North America, not in Paraguay, Ethiopia, or Indonesia.

But even more important than geography is the fact that we are Christian. This must always be in the forefront of our identity. So I propose that we consider this name: "Mennonite Churches in Christ" (MCIC). I particularly like using the plural, churches, since this emphasizes the historical and present reality of our mostly congregationally based polity.

Ryan Ahlgrim
Indianapolis, Ind.

General Board Cuts Funding to Other Groups in Response to Fewer Conference Contributions (Nov. 26). What I find disappointing in this report are the things that the Mennonite Church General Board agreed to eliminate from the budget: Mennonite World Conference (MWC), Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), New Call to Peacemaking, and the Ecumenical Center for Stewardship Studies.

Decisions to reduce budgets are always difficult. What we decide to eliminate, however, is an indication of priorities. When MWC is taken from the General Board budget, will this not also impact congregational contributions to this organization? And the timing of this decision is especially unfortunate because of the meeting of the Mennonite World Assembly in Calcutta in 1997, for which funds are desperately needed.

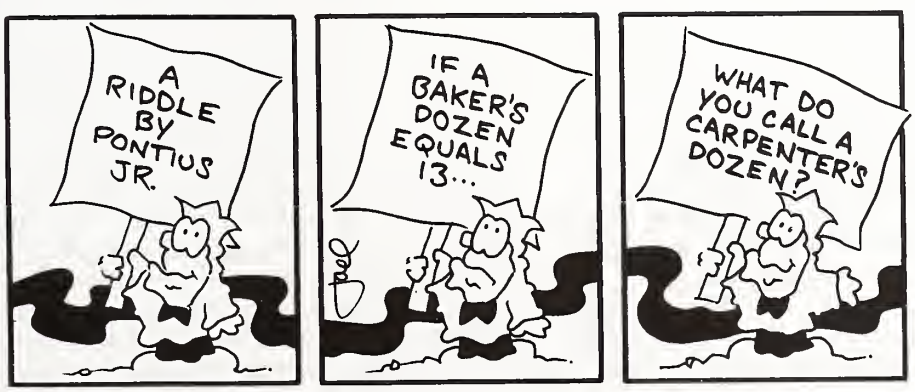
Cutting CPT and New Call is also symptomatic of another problem for the church. It seems we continue to give lip service to our being a peace church, but funding for peace initiatives are often the first to be discontinued when there are budget pinches. And how are we doing "more to support our own Peace and Justice Committee" as the report states? The new budget continues to give only $2,500 to this committee.

How we will live as people of peace in the midst of a violent society is not clear at this point. The church will need to invest more in order to teach the gospel of peace through small but practical demonstrations such as CPT. This is a golden evangelizing opportunity.

Paul M. Gingrich
Elkhart, Ind.

Gospel Herald *welcomes your letters, either about our contents or about the issues which are currently facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—350 to 400 words—and about one subject only. Address your letters to "Readers Say," 616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683. E-mail:* GHerald%mph@mcimail.com

Pontius' Puddle



Caught between the religious law and the Spirit:

Joseph can teach us a great deal more than carpentry

The Spirit of God in our hearts, that calls for compassion, must be in dialogue with the God of Scripture, helping us hear God's voice and do God's will.

by Michael Chandler

In the celebrations that surround our observance of Christmas, one of the things we often overlook is the role that Joseph played in the life of Jesus. We hear a great deal about Mary, Jesus' mother—and for good reason. For we can readily acknowledge that she was an important influence on Jesus,

But Joseph was also chosen by God, and he left an unmistakable mark on Jesus. Joseph was part of God's plan, and he can serve as an example to all fathers who wish to raise godly and compassionate children. Along with teaching Jesus about mercy and love, Joseph can teach us about living with the tensions between the religious law and the Spirit of God.

As a carpenter, Joseph was not the middle class artisan that we think of today. Carpenters made up about 5 percent of the population of that day, and they were considered just above the lowest 10 percent—along with robbers, beggars, and other desperate people. But Joseph was a good, honest, righteous man, and he did have a "name" or a recognized ancestry.

Joseph had likely been waiting for the moment of betrothal to Mary for as long as he could remember. His family had worked out all the plans and carefully negotiated all the details with Mary's family.

This ancient state of betrothal was more than engagement and just short of marriage. It involved the whole village as well as the two families. The village would gather and witness the signing of the agreement by the leaders. The couple did not yet live together, but the agreement was binding. To break this public agreement would require a formal divorce.

We know the story. After their betrothal, Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant. Religious law required that Joseph, no matter how he felt about Mary, must annul the marriage contract.

Joseph was a righteous man, we are told. That means that he was fair and just. It also meant that he was a religious man and attempted to fulfill all that was required by the law. Now that his promised one was pregnant, the law required that he divorce her. In accordance with Deuteronomy 22:23-24, the penalty for this apparent offense of Mary's was death by stoning. We know of this penalty because it applied to the woman caught in adultery who was later brought before this son that Mary was carrying.

What should Joseph do? Both Joseph and Mary probably cried themselves to sleep the night Joseph found out. But Joseph had a powerful dream; an angel said that he should go ahead and take Mary for his wife. The angel also said that the baby that Mary was carrying was of the Holy Spirit.

Joseph responded in a radical way to this unexpected command from God. On the basis of the divine word in a dream, he stepped over some very powerful, sacred boundaries. He committed himself to Mary and the baby. Joseph went beyond the law and did as he was commanded in the dream. His act of naming the baby was important, because in this way Joseph claimed the child for his own. He gave the baby his identity, his ancestry. This is how Jesus is both "Son of God" and "Son of David."

To us a Savior is born. His father named him Jesus, for he will save us, not from our tensions, but from our sins.

Perhaps Joseph passed on to his son this trait of being merciful, understanding those accused of sin and breaking the law. Not unlike his father, Jesus said, "Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone." He also said, "Your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:35-36).

Joseph was most likely caught in the same tensions that this yet-unborn son found himself caught in throughout his life—a tension that the church has been caught in throughout the ages, and a tension that we as Bible-believing people continue to face. This tension is the tension that exists between the law of the Bible and the Christian's supreme calling to love,

even when it seems to violate the law.

Joseph was caught in the tension between the letter of the religious law, which he loved and respected, and the Spirit of God speaking to his heart. The Spirit called to him in a dream to do a compassionate, merciful, life-giving thing. This is the tension into which the Messiah was born. Is it any wonder that this would also be the tension that would hound the son of God, the Son of Joseph, throughout his adult life?

Joseph's son would tell his followers, "Your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees." By that he meant that the Spirit of God in our hearts calls for extraordinary compassion. This Spirit must be in dialogue with the God of Scripture. He meant that believers must stand in the tension between the law and the Spirit if we are to hear God's voice and do God's will.

By giving compassion priority over the law, by giving the Spirit in a dream priority over the legal code, by being faithful to the Spirit of God moving in his heart rather than to the demands of the religious leaders, Joseph was already facing the "you have heard that it has been said . . . but I say to you" tension that would later be displayed in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' father had already stood in the tension between the prevailing understanding of God's commands and the new thing that God was doing in Jesus. And he taught his son well.

From beginning to end, from before his birth to his resurrection, the message of Jesus is the same. In the tensions in our lives, in our doubts and uncertainties, Christ's message is compassionate. It restores life and sets people free from bondage. It brings healing. Restorative, healing compassion is the supreme calling of the divine laws that come through the Holy Spirit and the holy Scripture to God's people.

To us a Savior is born. Joseph named him Jesus, for he saves people—not from our tensions—but from our sins.

Michael Chandler, pastor of the Albuquerque (N.M.) Mennonite Church, is the husband of Linda and the father of Valerie and Nathanael.

God with us:

'At least I do what I say I'm going to do'

God's gift to us at Christmas is the affirmation that God will be with us always, even in the most humble and lowly places of our natures and our circumstances.

by Betsy Headrick McCrae

In Vietnam these days, it's often hard to see God working. That's not because of the "evil" hand of communism. It's not even that most Vietnamese people know little about Christianity. It's a phenomenon we in the West are much more familiar with—greed, acquisitiveness, looking out for number one (although here that at least includes the whole family). Where do we find the God of the poor and the lowly in the middle of this gold rush? Where is Emmanuel, God with us?

God is here, of course, still in humble surroundings not unlike the Bethlehem stable. One of these places is in the mountain city of Dalat, in a school and home for mentally handicapped children. God is here in the person of Sister Van, whose love shines forth like a light in the darkness, whose commitment to her people holds strong against the materialistic tide.

Sister Van, a Roman Catholic nun, is a small woman in her 40s. She's fragile-looking but there's fire in her eyes when she speaks about her work. When asked how long her school has been operating, she says, "Ten years, but it took me three years to convince the Dalat People's Committee to allow me to start it." She had to convince local authorities that teaching mentally handicapped children was worthwhile. In Vietnam, such children are often kept out of sight; they are considered of little value to family and society. "Why should these useless children benefit from a special school?" the authorities asked.

Sister Van persevered and eventually received permission to set up her school. She located a building, hired a handful of teachers, and invited mentally handicapped children from the town and surrounding countryside to come. She and her staff began caring for these children and teaching them skills appropriate to their abilities. They lived simply and worked with little. They tried their best to prepare the children to return to their homes, to be useful to their families in their villages.

When Sister Van's work began to attract international aid agencies' attention, local authorities took another look—and saw great possibilities for receiving the funding they coveted. So they encouraged Sister Van to make the most of her connections. "Ask for money for a new building," they said. "Ask for money for new equipment. They'll give you anything you ask and we can all benefit."

Sister Van kept her eyes and heart focused on the children. "I will accept training for myself and for my staff," she said. "Training enables us to teach the children new skills. But I will not accept money for material things. These children must be able to go back to their homes, to live simply and with little as their families do. I will not sacrifice them and their limited possibilities to make life easier for myself. I will not create disappointment and discontent so I can get rich."

Sister Van struggles valiantly against the stream. "Do many people understand why you do what you do?" I ask.

"No," she sighs, "not many. They think I'm foolish. They tell me I'm stupid not to get rich while I can. But," she adds with a bit more sparkle, "at least they can see I do what I say I'm going to do."

She tells about a school for deaf children, also in Dalat. This school has received substantial international funding but, as in many similar situations, the money has not been used for its intended purposes. Sister Van explains, "When you go to the deaf school, you won't see the equipment that was supposed to have been purchased. But here—the People's Committee knows if they give me even a small sum of money to buy tables or chairs, when they come to visit they will find them in use. They've learned to trust me. And I keep going back to them for help because it is their job to take care of Dalat's children. In the end, I think they will feel proud of what they've done."

God's gift to us here in Vietnam at Christmas is the affirmation that God is present with us always, even in the humblest and lowliest places of our natures and our circumstances. In Sister Van, we again receive this gift. The children at her school receive this gift. The people of Vietnam, as skeptical as they may be, also receive this gift. In Sister Van we find Emmanuel and know without a doubt that God is with us.

Betsy Headrick McCrae, Cheraw, Colo., is a member of Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis, Minn.

Drawing forth the vision in the city:

Mennonite urban ministry directors meet for support

Goshen, Ind. (MBM)—Representing more than a dozen U.S. cities, Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) urban ministry directors met, Nov. 8-9, for their annual gathering.

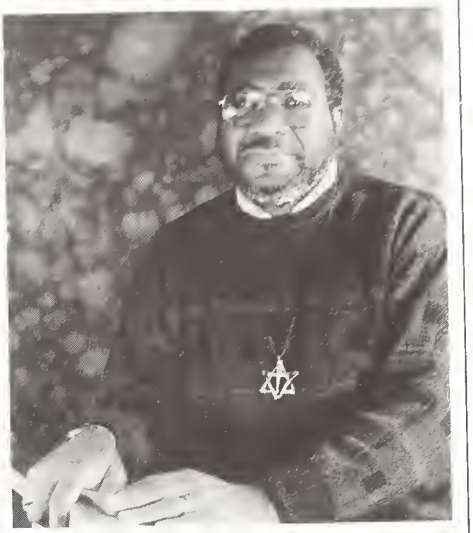
The urban ministry directors work with MBM's office for evangelism and church development to provide resources for urban church planting. They also work with conferences to identify and develop leaders, coach church planters, and devise systems for church planting that reduce the possibility of failure or burn out. Most urban ministry directors primarily serve as pastors, teachers, conference leaders, and agency staff themselves.

Roy Williams, urban ministry director for Tampa, Fla., said at the meeting that he has seen a host of programs addressing economic and social issues grow out of his congregation, College Hill Mennonite Church. "Whatever we have to show is from this body," he said. "If we didn't have the type of leadership in the things we have here, I don't think we could have developed anything."

"We are a network of people who carry vision for our cities—not only carrying the vision but also carrying ideas and strategies about what needs to happen, for the development of congregations in our communities and cities," said John Powell, MBM staff consultant for urban church leadership.

One of every seven Mennonite Church congregations has begun since 1985, when Vision '95 was adopted at the biennial assembly in Ames, Iowa. Conference mission leaders, urban ministry directors, congregations, and individuals continue to carry the vision to plant churches.

MBM president Stanley Green called the network "an instrument for enabling church planting. We work at ways of developing partnerships that will maximize the resources available in any one setting. We are constantly focused in thinking about vision . . . not only to share our vision, but to draw forth the vision that is taking shape in every city."



John Powell, Mennonite Board of Missions staff consultant for urban leadership, spoke to the group of urban ministry directors on Nov. 8.

"My intention is to do what I can to not only encourage this network and this family, but to see this family grow to include all kinds of people who today don't even know who Jesus is—not only as part of this family, but as part of the leadership of the church," said Allan Yoder, who leads MBM's evangelism and church development efforts.

—Tom Price

Urban leaders discuss system for planting

Goshen, Ind. (MBM)—What three primary elements do you need to start a church?

If you answered, "Money, money, money," you're wrong.

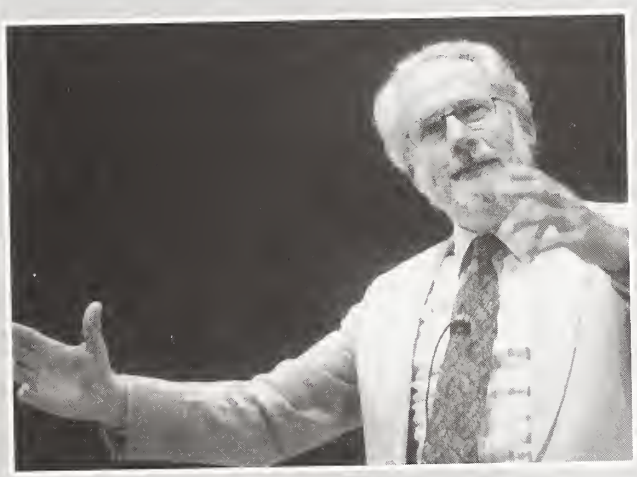
As Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) convened its network of urban ministry directors, Nov. 8-9, these veterans of church development began work to come up with systems for their church-planting efforts. "We all know what we need to do. The problem is how do we make sure we do the stuff we know we should be doing?" said Allan Yoder, who leads the urban ministry directors' network.

In the end, Yoder produced a list of 11 needs, ranked chronologically:

1. *Personal assessment:* How do you find a leader with vision, commitment, and call?
2. *Site assessment:* Where should the church be started?
3. *Strategy development:* What is the plan? What are the core values? How do you make sure you get the blessing from local authorities?
4. *Prayer team and support:* "How do you start a church if you can't hold together a prayer team?" said Jeff Wright, urban ministry director for Los Angeles.
5. *Coaching:* "Who is going to walk with you, support you?" Yoder said. "Coaching is helping you design the plays and decide who is on the field."
6. *A leadership development system.*
7. *A process for evaluation and adjustment.*
8. *Funding.*
9. *Developing an Anabaptist identity.*
10. *Vision and plans for starting another church.*
11. *Networking.*

—Tom Price

Christ transcends culture. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—"The Christian church is taking deep roots in cultures everywhere with unprecedented intensity," David Shenk declared in an address at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). Shenk gave the 1996 Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar Lecture Series, Nov. 11-13, at EMU on the theme, "Biblical Faith Meeting World Religions." In his presentations, Shenk cited a number of "surprises" from the creation account in Genesis and from the New Testament Gospels that he has found helpful in presenting the gospel. For example, "the idea of a king entering a city riding on a donkey shook the foundations of the established order," Shenk said. "Jesus transforms cultures and makes all things new. His reign is extending from sea to sea around the world."



Shenk's latest book is *Global Gods: Exploring the Role of Religions in Modern Societies.*—Jim Bishop

Smashing ceramic jugs is one destructive thing the children at Lima (Ohio) Mennonite Church are encouraged to do each year. On Fall Missions Sunday, they smash the ceramic jug banks in which they have collected coins over the past year, and they wait for the youth and adults in the congregation to count the money. This year's celebration on Nov. 17 continued the 31-year-old tradition. About 65 jugs were broken to raise nearly $600 to help support Anne Garber Kompaore, who serves in Burkina Faso with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

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A month of simple living is the goal of 15 students in the Pax Club at Goshen (Ind.) College. They signed a basic food-and-clothes agreement as a way of being in solidarity with those for whom a simple diet and wardrobe are a way of life. The students have allotted themselves seven shirts, three pairs of pants, three skirts, two pairs of shoes, a sweater, jacket or coat, gloves, and a hat. Most have changed their diets to examine the amount of processed food, sugars, and other "luxury" foods that can be eliminated. Some are also washing their clothes by hand and cutting their hair. Some students are hoping their current choices will lead to permanent future lifestyle changes. "We can't change the world," says first-year student Tim Godshall, "but we can change ourselves." —*Goshen Record*

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Halushki and prayer—those were two elements of a Nov. 5 meeting at Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa. Member Mildred Czuplak prepared the halushki, a traditional Eastern European dish of cabbage and noodles, for the group. The meal and worship time were particularly designed to honor the diversity of the congregation and to pray for their life together.—*Steve Kriss*

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'Mennonite stew,' cooked in large copper kettles over a wood fire, was the featured dish at a fellowship meal for more than 500 people who gathered for Menno-Fest, a celebration of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons. Mennonites of western Ohio who gathered at Bluffton College on Oct. 27 for the event brought ingredients for the stew. The day also included a showing of the film *The Radicals,* musical programs, and a worship service with communion. The worship service featured four vignettes from Anabaptist-Mennonite history. An offering of $600 was given to Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes.—*Claude Boyer*

Mulching service. *Salunga, Pa. (EMM)*—Jered Hess, Chris Fretz, and Joel Hess (left to right) were among eight students from Kraybill Mennonite School, Mount Joy, Pa., who got their hands dirty working at Eastern Mennonite Missions during their annual Service Day on Oct. 23. Some of the students helped to mulch trees and flower beds around the property, and others weeded old books from the resource library. "Jesus said that he didn't come to be served but to serve. We're practicing being servants," said sixth grader Adrian Groff of Mountville (Pa.) Mennonite Church. Each year, students in grades 6-8 spend one day outside the classroom working with local organizations.—*Carol Wert*

Illinois Inter-Mennonite meeting centers on trust

Meadows, Ill.—By the end of the day, a huge banner in front of the Meadows meetinghouse, which had been ripped apart in the morning worship, was sewn together. Participants united with the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center's choir in praying, "Create in me a new heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me."

These actions symbolized the hopes of Illinois and Central District (West) Conferences, meeting at Meadows (Ill.) Mennonite Church on Nov. 9.

Numerous speeches and workshops focused on the theme, "Learning How to Trust," emphasizing that rebuilding trust takes considerable time. James Waltner of Goshen, Ind., moderator-elect of Indiana-Michigan Conference, noted that a large portion of Psalms centers on lament and crying. Waltner said, however, that the Psalms reflect a life moving toward praise to God.

Rebuilding trust seemed an apt theme, as both the Illinois and Central District conferences have debated the issue of homosexuality. This conflict was the backdrop for the worship, led by Glen and Thelma Horner and Mary Oyer, and a variety of workshops. A few participants openly talked of eventual separation, while some expressed hopes of ultimately achieving new levels of trust.—*Levi Miller*

Haven of Hope rebuilds after Hurricane Andrew

Florida City, Fla.—Four years after Hurricane Andrew devastated southern Florida, one local ministry is finally experiencing restoration. Haven of Hope, a home for pregnant teens, was irreparably damaged by Andrew's winds.

Kathleen Hartzler, interim executive director and member of Homestead Mennonite Church, remembers not knowing how to begin the rebuilding as she walked around the vacant lot after rubble from the building was hauled away.

Mennonite Disaster Service had planned to help rebuild the house, but the volunteers needed to leave Homestead before Haven of Hope acquired a building permit. In the wake of their departure, the superintendent of a local building firm stepped in by recruiting over $100,000 in materials and labor.

The building project was then taken over by Ernie Pries, coordinator of the Homestead congregation's community outreach program. This program now coordinates the Haven of Hope effort. Hartzler says the home will be opened in February if all goes as planned.

Rebuilding has involved more than construction, however, says Hartzler. A new board had to be formed since the hurricane forced some former board members to relocate.

The home is built for 10 residents. —*with Joyce Moyer Hostetter*

Fire damages Northern Ireland church where Mennonite worker serves

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM-MCC-COM)—Seven years after its sanctuary was damaged by a fire bomb, a Methodist congregation situated on the dividing wall between Belfast, Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities, lost its church hall in a Nov. 10 fire.

David Moser, the first joint worker in Europe for the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) of the Mennonite Church, left on Dec. 1 to serve a three-year term as assistant pastor of the congregation, the Springfield Road Methodist Church.

As the denomination's central mission in Belfast, the congregation saw its sanctuary sustain bomb and fire damage in a 1989 riot when Catholic youth threw a bomb into the building. The latest damage will not affect a major remodeling program scheduled to begin in January, according to Joe Campbell, joint program coordinator in Northern Ireland for MBM and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). "Security measures will have to be a priority for that building, as it was suspected that kids from the local area broke into the church and started last night's fire," Campbell says.

Damaged. John and Naomi Lederach, MCC workers whose home sits along the dividing line and at the back of the church building, heard what sounded like gunfire at 7:45 p.m. on Nov. 10. "It was, in fact, the roof tiles exploding in the intense heat," Campbell says. "The fire department was called and soon had the fire under control. But sadly the hall was destroyed. The adjoining worship area suffered smoke and water damage."

David Moser recently began as assistant pastor at Springfield Road Methodist Church in Belfast, which was damaged by fire on Nov. 10.

Besides ministering in the small, 25-member congregation, Moser hopes to work in mission to the surrounding inner-city neighborhood through use of the church's community center and to work in mediation between Catholics and Protestants alongside an ecumenical house community.

Moser previously served for three years with MBM and MCC in Northern Ireland. These groups work together in that country, where efforts to bring reconciliation include political contacts between factional leaders and research into sectarianism and political conflict. From 1987 to 1990, Moser worked among inner-city Catholic and Protestant youth in Belfast. There he met Debbie Watters, a volunteer youth worker and native of Northern Ireland, who married Moser in November 1992.

As Moser returns to Northern Ireland with support from his home congregation, First Mennonite Church of Berne, Ind., he considers Mennonite efforts there as repaying a debt. "Anabaptist Christians owe a lot to the Irish. They are the folks who carried Christianity to [continental] Europe and specifically to the areas where Anabaptism developed," he says. "We are going back to Ireland, to the womb of our own development of Christianity."—*Tom Price*

Philadelphia high school plans September opening

Philadelphia, Pa.—Philadelphia Mennonite High School (PMHS) will open its doors in September 1997 in a former Ukranian Catholic school building.

The school is an outgrowth of the 20 Mennonite congregations. The PMHS board works under the Philadelphia Inter-Mennonite Task Force that represents the four Mennonite conferences with churches in the city.

Made up of Philadelphians, the board has drafted a statement that says the mission of PMHS is "to provide a Christ-centered, academically excellent, multicultural education in an urban context that enables students to achieve their full potential and to develop a lifestyle of service and peacemaking."

Jim Leaman, pastor of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, is the first staff member as coordinator of development and public relations. The board is exploring options for long- and short-term exchanges with Lancaster Mennonite and Christopher Dock high schools.

The school will begin with grades 9-11 with plans to add 12th grade in 1998.—*Lancaster Conference News*

Irish peace efforts are crumbling, says Campbell

Akron, Pa. (MCC-MBM)—"Around the countryside, relationships between Roman Catholics and Protestants are at an all-time low," reports Joe Campbell from Northern Ireland. The news is especially discouraging to Campbell, who coordinates both Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Board of Missions work in Ireland. The programs focus on conflict mediation in congregations and local communities.

Fragile peace. Campbell and his colleagues were elated when the various armed groups carried through on a cease-fire for 17 months—October 1994 to February 1996. Many believed "The Troubles" of 26 years were at an end.

But the peace proved fragile. The cease-fire ended with an Irish Republican Army bombing in London in February. Violence erupted again this summer on Irish soil when Protestant members of the Orange Order, a fraternity, insisted on marching through Catholic communities to celebrate Protestants' military victory over Catholics more than 300 years ago. Now Catholics are boycotting some 150 businesses owned by Orange Order members in border communities, Campbell relates.

> ***'The search for peace is hard work, demanding the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, and the love of Christ.'***
>
> **—Joe Campbell**

After a tough year of seeing peace-building efforts crumble, Campbell says, "The search for peace is hard work, demanding the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, and the love of Christ. If outright violence begins anew in the coming weeks—as seems likely—we will need all of the resources God gives God's people," he adds.—*Tom Price*

- **Goshen receives estate.** Goshen (Ind.) College recently received the second-largest estate ever to be donated to the college. Harry Keasey, a former teacher, died recently and left his estate worth over $750,000 to Goshen. The Keasey Memorial Scholarship Fund will aid students with financial need from the northeast quadrant of Indiana.

- **Correction.** The Dec. 10 issue of *Gospel Herald* reported that two Ethiopian Mennonite leaders were killed in the hijacked Ethiopian Airlines jet that crashed on Nov. 23. Only one, Beyene Gutema, was a member of the Ethiopian Mennonite church, the Meserete Kristos Church. Zelalem Ayenew was an employee of World Vision. Gutema, who was scheduled to lead Africa Day evening worship at India 1997, is survived by his wife and three children.

- **EMM increases budget.** The board of Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) approved a $6.5 million budget for 1997, half a million dollars higher than last year's budget, in a Nov. 22 meeting. The increased budget will allow EMM to place more workers within what is called the 10/40 Window—an area of Africa and Asia between the 10th and 40th degrees of latitude. EMM hopes to place four to six adults in Vietnam in 1997 and to send additional workers to Thailand and Cambodia.

- **EMU board plans building.** The board of trustees of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., unanimously approved moving ahead with plans and fundraising for building of the University Commons, a proposed multipurpose center. The projected cost of the building project includes $8 million in new construction.

- **MBM gives start-up grants.** Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) has awarded two start-up grants that will support Illinois Mennonite Conference church-planting efforts in Kankakee, Ill., and in Chicago's northwestern Logan Square neighborhood. MBM's Evangelism and Church Development program recently gave grants to (1) provide one year's rent for an office and meeting place for an emerging congregation in Kankakee and (2) for rent for church planters Juan and Amaryllis Laureano in a Polish and Hispanic neighborhood of Chicago.

- **Kaufman symposium held.** Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., held a symposium on the theology of Gordon D. Kaufman, Nov. 3-4. Kaufman, who holds an endowed chair in theology at Harvard University, graduated from Bethel. Close to 300 people heard 13 papers by scholars and professors in the fields of theology, religion, Bible, communication, psychology, and philosophy.—*The Mennonite*

- **MHS board meets.** The Mennonite Health Services (MHS) board of directors, meeting Nov. 8-9 in Lancaster, Pa., approved a 1997 strategic plan that calls for developing intentional relationships with sponsoring denominations through meetings with denominational executives. It was announced that Larry Nikkel will stay on as MHS executive director. Outgoing MHS board chair LaVerne Epp was recognized for his nine years of service.

- **EMU establishes chair.** Eastern Mennonite University established the Pellman Endowed Chair, named in honor of longtime English professor Hubert R. Pellman, on Nov. 21. It will provide funds for student scholarships and help with operating expenses of EMU's language and literature department. Friends, family, and colleagues have given $716,000 toward an endowment goal of $1 million.

- **New center planned.** Mennonite Central Committee Central States has launched "Building to Share," a drive to raise $750,000 for a new material resources center building in North Newton, Kan. "We're spilling out of the seams," says Lorene Kaufman, workroom supervisor, of the current overcrowded building. The new facility will have a 4,200-square-foot workroom, 6,000 square feet of warehouse space, and 3,000 square feet of office space.

- **Commentaries move ahead.** Fifty Mennonite and Brethren Bible scholars heard about the progress of the Believers Church Bible Commentary series at a Nov. 23 meeting in New Orleans, La., held in conjunction with the Society of Biblical Literature. Eight commentaries have been published since 1986, and two more—*Hosea, Amos* and *2 Corinthians*—will come out within the next 15 months. —*Paul Zehr*

- **New appointments:**

Sheila Giesbrecht, administrator, Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

Jeff Landis, administrative assistant, Home Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.

Melanie Martin, volunteer intercessor, Discipleship Ministries, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.

- **Pastor transitions:**

Duane and Elaine Maust were licensed and installed as co-pastors at Jubilee Mennonite Church, Meridian, Miss., on Nov. 3.

Melvin Thomas completed a pastorate at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa., on Nov. 30. A transitional team (Harold E. Reed, Dorcas Miller Lehman, and Titus Peachey) will serve through Aug. 31, 1997.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Stephanie Houser, Lowville, N.Y., began a nine-month Voluntary Service term with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) in San Antonio, Texas.

Workers train in Harrisburg. *Harrisburg, Pa. (EMM)*—Thirty young adults are currently part of six Youth Evangelism Service (YES) teams training for three months at the Harrisburg (Pa.) Discipleship Center. They completed training on Dec. 12 and leave for outreach in January 1997. Two teams will serve four months in the countries of Honduras and Peru, three teams will serve eight months in the countries of Italy, Mexico, and the United States (Bronx, N.Y.), and one team will serve 12 months in the Middle East.

Front row, left to right: Leane Schroeder (Honduras), Terry Combs (Bronx), Natasha Loop (Italy), Zama Cameron (Middle East—team leader), Yvonne Wilkerson (Bronx), Lena Suydam (Italy—team leader), Kayleen Morgan (Mexico).

Second row: Jairo Ordenana and Lisa Headrick (Honduras), Patrick Nafziger (Peru), Amy Swanson and Jodi Goerzen (Mexico).

Third row: Fritz Hartman (Mexico), Misty Richardson (Honduras), Andre Zook (Peru), Maureen Hood (Middle East), and Amy Nason (Mexico).

Fourth row: Elizabeth Dich (Middle East), Carla Hurst and Micah Zimmerman (Italy), Kevin Boll (Honduras—team leader), and Karen Miller (Peru).

Fifth row: Karla King (Mexico), Amy Moore (Honduras), Mindy Nolt (Peru), Otoniel Soto (Mexico—team leader), and Jorge Paredes (Peru—team leader).

Sixth row: Tracy Hildebrand (Bronx—team leader), Marlin Watling (Bronx), Aaron Kauffman (Italy), and Brian Renno (Honduras).

Alice and Dennis Huxman, Lehigh, Kan., began a two-year MBM Voluntary Service term in Tucson, Ariz.

Renee Kanagy, Ypsilanti, Mich., has begun a one-year MBM Voluntary Service term in Washington, D.C.

Wendel Landes, West Liberty, Ohio, began a one-year term of MBM Voluntary Service in Washington, D.C.

Christina Rohrer, Lititz, Pa., began a six-month assignment in Hong Kong with Eastern Mennonite Missions and Bethany Ministries.

Mike Schmidt, Goessel, Kan., has begun a one-year term of MBM Voluntary Service in McAllen, Texas.

Cheryl Shreiner, Goshen, Ind., has begun a one-year MBM Voluntary Service term in Washington, D.C.

J. Konrad Wert, Lehigh Acres, Fla., began a one-year term of MBM Voluntary Service in Washington, D.C.

Steve Witmer returned to the United States after a two-year internship in the Middle East with Eastern Mennonite Missions. His address is 1305 South Colebrook Rd., Manheim, PA 17545.

Freddy Wong, Boston, Mass., began a one-year MBM Voluntary Service term in Richmond, Va.

• **Coming events:**

Basic Institute in Conflict Management and Mediation, Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University, Jan. 27-31, 1997. Faculty for the sessions are Dalton Reimer and Ron Claassen. More information is available from 800 909-8677.

Mennonite Disaster Service All-Unit meeting, Columbus, Miss., Feb. 7-8, 1997. "Ordinary People in God's Service" is the theme. Followed by Sunday worship and meal with members of Mt. Zoar Baptist. Registration packets available from 717 859-2210.

30th annual Mennonite sale and auction, Fresno, Calif., April 4-5, 1997. Includes auction, art exhibit, music, and international crafts. Benefits go to Mennonite Central Committee. More information is available from 209 638-6911.

• **New resources:**

Dead, Buried, and Living in Hebron is a 23-minute video produced by Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) about the conflict and peace process in the Middle East. Designed for use by individuals and groups. Available for rental or purchase from CPT at 312 455-1199; email: cpt@igc.org

• **Job openings:**

Assistant director of media and marketing services, Goshen (Ind.) College. responsibilities include production management; public relations; marketing, editorial, and writing support for administrative departments on campus for news releases and publication projects. More information from John D. Yoder, director of media and marketing services, at 219 535-7568; email: jdyoder@goshen.edu

Chemistry faculty position, Goshen (Ind.) College. Tenure-track position begins August 1997. Doctorate in chemistry required. Responsibilities may include general, physical, and inorganic chemistry, chemistry for allied health majors, and initiation of an undergraduate research program. More information from John D. Nyce, interim academic dean, at 219 535-7503; email: johndn@goshen.edu

Editor, The Other Side magazine, Philadelphia, Pa. Qualifications include editorial and writing experience, good organization, interest in justice issues, and strong biblical background. Full-time position begins early 1997. Contact 215 849-2178.

Mennonite Foundation representative, Harrisonburg, Va. Experience in fundraising, planned giving, banking investments, law, accounting, or sales is helpful; limited travel required. Send or fax letter of interest and résumé to Mennonite Mutual Aid, Human Resources Department, PO Box 483, Goshen, IN 46527; 800 348-7468.

NEW MEMBERS

Clinton Frame, Goshen, Ind.: Carrie Graber, Karl Graber, Roger Huffman, Kim Huffman, Cheryl King, Lawrence Schrock, Linda Schrock, Bill Went, Karen Went, Jennifer Shetler, Bruce Williamson, Sheldon Bontrager, Willard Shetler, Eleanor Hawks, Clara Kuhns, and Edward Zimmerman.

Habecker, Lancaster, Pa.: Derrick Charles.

Hopedale, Ill.: Marian Sauder Egli.

Huntington, Newport News, Va.: David Allen and Carroll and Marie Shields.

Maple Grove, Atglen, Pa.: Kevin Kauffman, Grace Shrom, Ryan Smoker, Catherine Case, Joseph and Catharine King, Doug and Wanda Lapp, Paul and Joy Sherman, and Henry and Martha Umble.

Neffsville, Lancaster, Pa.: Loren Godshall and Kathy Brubaker.

Park View, Harrisonburg, Va.: Ted Grimsrud and Kathleen Temple.

Pike, Elida, Ohio: Matthew Ream, Luke Hartman, Elaine Troyer, Ronda Brenneman, Katie Ream, Evelyn Wilcox, and Donald Wilcox.

Pinto, Md.: Steven Eric Flowers and Mark Gregory Light.

Powhatan, Va.: Andy Vaughn, Aaron Vaughn, Adam Vaughn, and Polly Berry.

Salem, Elida, Ohio: Charles and Patti McClain.

Souderton, Pa.: Nakia Green.

Sunnyslope, Phoenix, Ariz.: Ernest Lafferty and Andrew Fiedler.

Zurich, Ont.: Richard Behnish, Lillian Steckle, and Simeon Steckle.

BIRTHS

Avina, Josie Short and Benny, Pettisville, Ohio, Mikala Nicole (third child), Nov. 17.

Banker, Sandy and Steve, North Wales, Pa., Alycia Joy (first child), Nov. 4.

Beck, Deana Chupp and Duane, Butler, Ind., Clara Grace (first child), Sept. 21.

Flynn, Tonja Martin and Michael, Pittsburgh, Pa., Keely Christine (first child), Nov. 15.

Franklin, Sandra Reisinger and David, Akron, Pa., Daniel LeRoy (second child), Nov. 1.

Ganger, Andrea and Rob, Goshen, Ind., Zachariah Robert (second child), Oct. 25.

Gochenaur, Karen Rheinheimer and Robert, Airville, Pa., Alexa Nikelle (third child), Oct. 10.

Grieser, Joan Fetterman and Bill, Wauseon, Ohio, Kathleen Jean (second child), Oct. 21.

Guntz, Patricia Gordon and Merle, Telford, Pa., (twins) Grace Kathleen and Faith Elizabeth (second and third children), Nov. 22.

Halteman, Debra E. Mace and M. Brandon, Line Lexington, Pa., Abigail Jordan (first child), Nov. 28.

Horst, Marlene Harder and René, Goshen, Ind., Matías Harder (first child), Nov. 1.

Leis, Susan Stewart and Marvin, Tavistock, Ont., Caleb Joshua (first child), Oct. 27.

Metzler, Lucille Hess and David, Conestoga, Pa., Kira Danelle (first child), Oct. 19.

Miller, Linda Suderman and James S., Goshen, Ind., Robert Oscar (third child), Sept. 27.

Neuenschwander, Beth Grieser and Steve, Archbold, Ohio, Shannon Grace (third child), Nov. 15.

Nguyen, Lien Thi and Tung Thanh, Harrisonburg, Va., Jessica Yam (third child), Nov. 8.

Schlosser, Jolene Hunsberger and Jack, Quinten, Va., Josiah Smith (third child), Oct. 24.

Schmeider, Candi Wagler and Doug, Marengo, Iowa, Riley Mae (first child), Oct. 1.

Shantz, Chris Murray and Paul, Baden, Ont., Nathan Murray (second child), Oct. 24.

Short, Deb Grieser and Randy, West Unity, Ohio, Rebekah Sue (sixth child), June 20.

Smith, Valerie and Randy, Morton, Ill., Walker Matthew (second child), Nov. 14.

Sommer, Trina and Mark, Bluffton, Ohio, Kaelin Diane (first child), Nov. 17.

Stoltzfus, Susan Swartzendruber and Grant, Harrisonburg, Va., Matthew Grant (third child), Nov. 14.

Stucky, Kirsten Klassen and Mark, Anya Klassen (first child), Oct. 7.

Unternahrer, Jenny Casteel and Carl, Wayland, Iowa, Sarah Marie (first child), Nov. 12.

Yantzi, Janet Swartz and Marvin, Tavistock, Ont., Jared Thomas (second child), Nov. 14.

Yutzy, Tammy Miller and Brian, Hutchinson, Kan., Brandon Edward (first child), Nov. 29.

MARRIAGES

Berry-El-Lati: Edmund F. Berry, Souderton, Pa. (Baptist), and Suzi El-Lati, Souderton, Pa. (Blooming Glen), Nov. 23, by Truman H. Brunk Jr.

Chalmers-Fry: LaRelda Chalmers, Morton, Ill., and Donald Fry, Morton, Ill. (First), Oct. 26.

Fretz-Yagar: Paul Fretz, Conestogo, Ont. (St. Jacobs), and

Sarah Yagar, St. Jacobs, Ont. (St. Jacobs), Oct. 5, by Harold Hildebrand Schlegel.

Gehman-Shultz: Steve Gehman, Birmingham, Ala. (Southside Mennonite Fellowship), and Rosemary Shultz, Lancaster, Pa. (Charlotte Street), Oct. 26, by Leon Miller.

Geil-Menendez: Ronald Geil, Perkinston, Miss. (Gulfhaven), and Carrie Menendez, Perkinston, Miss. (Lighthouse Fellowship), Nov. 2, by David Kniss.

Gingerich-Kempf: Leland Gingerich, Wellman, Iowa (West Union), and Julie Kempf, Wellman, Iowa, Oct. 5.

Jantzi-McIntosh: Cara Jantzi, Lowville, N.Y. (First of New Bremen), and Morris McIntosh, Rodman, N.Y., Oct. 5, by Lester Bauman.

Lehman-Rios: Angela Lehman, Kirkwood, Pa. (Stumptown), and Manuel Rios, Liberal, Kan., Sept. 7, by Phoebe Hershey (aunt of the bride).

Nafziger-Swartzbaugh: Elaine Nafziger, Archbold, Ohio (Central), and Edward Swartzbaugh, Archbold, Ohio (United Methodist), Nov. 16, by Randy Nafziger (cousin of the bride).

Noftsier-Woods: Karla Noftsier, Castorland, N.Y., and Rusty Woods, Richville, N.Y., Sept. 14, by Lester Bauman.

Powell-Weaver: Sam Powell, Amelia, Va. (Powhatan), and Lora Weaver, Uniontown, Ohio (Friendship Chapel), Oct. 12, by Preston Nowlin.

DEATHS

Blauch, James William, 72, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Oct. 22, 1924, Short Gap, W.Va., to Earl and Nellie Ward Blauch. Died: Nov. 16, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Merda Mae Bridge Blauch; children: James William Jr., Lois Blauch Miller; brothers and sisters: Ralph, Glen, Dale, Gladys Garges, Mildred Miller, Irene Moreland; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 19, Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, by Steve Yoder and Beryl Jantzi. Burial: Weavers Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Bowman, Verniece Holst, 75, Petersburg, Ont. Born: Sept. 15, 1921, Waterloo Twp., Ont., to David and Amanda Schlabach Holst. Died: Nov. 8, 1996, Kitchener, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Burton L. Bowman; children: Donald, Murray, Roger, Blossom, Vincent; brothers: Lemor and Carlyle Holst; 6 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 11, First Mennonite Church, by Rudy Baergen. Burial: Wilmot Center Cemetery.

Burkholder, Violet Esther Wright, 85, Stouffville, Ont. Born: Jan. 15, 1911, Ontario, to William and Alice Ablett Wright. Died: Nov. 4, 1996, Stouffville, Ont., of a stroke. Survivors—children: Esther Reesor, Irene Steiner, Sylvia Gallian, Howard; brother and sisters: Floyd Wright, Gladys Wright, Connie Yake; 12 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lorne Burkholder (husband). Congregational membership: Wideman Mennonite Church. Funeral: Nov. 7, Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, by Lawrence Burkholder. Burial: Cedar Grove Mennonite Cemetery.

Caplinger, Wilda Dove, 94, Broadway, Va. Born: Jan. 10, 1902, Criders, Va., to Joseph and Zerna Dove Dove. Died: Nov. 20, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va. Survivors—children: Ray, Alverta Dove, Velma May, Nola Murray, Lela Crumley, Norma Bowman, Lois Burkholder; brother and sisters: Ralph Dove, Goldie May, Ogretta Nesselrodt; 11 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, 9 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: I. Franklin Caplinger (husband). Funeral and burial: Nov. 23, Zion Mennonite Church, by Harvey Yoder and Richard K. Early.

Cobb, Daniel Wayne, 52, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Nov. 5, 1944, Oak Ridge, Tenn., to Herschel and Roxie Ball Cobb. Died: Nov. 16, 1996, Archbold, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—wife: Janice Cobb; children: Theodore, Adam, Lincoln, Janessa; brothers: James, Floyd. Predeceased by: Jerry and Terry (infant sons). Congregational membership: Tedrow Mennonite Church. Funeral: Nov. 20, Central Mennonite Church, by Randy Nafziger and Matt Boyers. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Foreman, David Wayne, 44, Zurich, Ont. Born: Nov. 23, 1951, London, Ont., to William and Flora Foreman. Died: Nov. 17, 1996, Sarnia, Ont. Survivors—daughters: DeAnn, Dwana; brother and sister: Michael, Patricia Patterson. Congregational membership: Zurich Mennonite Church. Memorial service: Nov. 19, T. Stephenson and Son Funeral Home, by Julianna Bender. Cremated.

Gerber, Melvena Kamp, 81, Sugarcreek, Ohio. Born: Sept. 2, 1915, Wayne County, Ohio, to Otto and Elizabeth Zimmerly Kamp. Died: Nov. 18, 1996, Dover, Ohio, of cancer. Survivors—husband: Titus Gerber; children: Duane, Joan Miller, Marilyn J. Nussbaum; sisters: Sylvia Jaberg, Verna Raber, Marie Amstutz; 5 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 21, Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, by Ross A. Miller and Don Hamsher.

Harrington, Neola Swingle, 92, Spartansburg, Pa. Born: May 5, 1904, Great Bend, Kan., to Orley and Eliza Noble Swingle. Died: Nov. 12, 1996, Corry, Pa. Survivors—sons: Dale, Lyle; 15 grandchildren, 45 great-grandchildren, 18 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Cecil Harrington (husband) and Carolyn Mitchell (daughter). Funeral: Nov. 15, Valley View Mennonite Church, by Carl L. Smeltzer. Burial: Rose Hill Cemetery.

Horst, Marian E. Messner, 88, Goshen, Ind. Born: July 27, 1912, Strasburg, Pa., to John J. and Emma Hess Messner. Died: Nov. 23, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Laurence Horst; daughter: Ramona Horst Bailey; brother and sisters: Robert Messner, Dorothy Witmer, Arlene Erb; 2 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 27, College Mennonite Church, by Nancy Kauffmann and Duane Beck. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

King, Bertha Leah Detweiler, 90. Born: April 24, 1906, Harper, Kan., to William Eby and Emma Francis Shepp Detweiler. Died: Nov. 2, 1996, Hesston, Kan. Survivors—children: Eldon, Virginia Ediger, Patricia Miller, Phyllis Kauffman, Calvin, Roberta Mathes; sister: Velma Detweiler Dunbar; 13 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Arami King (husband). Funeral and burial: Nov. 6, Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, by Royce Vogt.

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THE LAST WORD

Tough questions for our future (1):

What do I tell them in India?

Exactly one month from now, close to 3,500 Mennonites from around the world will gather in Calcutta, India, for the 13th assembly of Mennonite World Conference. Almost a fourth will come from North America. As one of these, I've been looking forward to seven days of worship and fellowship with my international sisters and brothers. I must also admit my enthusiasm has been tempered a bit recently, because I find myself taking with me more questions than I like.

It all surfaced most acutely during the Nov. 13-15 meeting of the Mennonite Church General Board (MCGB). Faced with declining contributions, the 32 representatives from district conferences and associate groups who make up MCGB had to come up with a realistic budget for 1997. They did so by freezing spending at 1996 levels, but even that leaves a $30,000 deficit in the new budget. To keep it from growing any larger, the board decided it had to cut. Among the items to go was $2,000 for Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

Now $2,000 is not a major part of MWC's annual budget of approximately $250,000. Nor does this international body get much of its operating budget from denominational structures—at least not from the Mennonite Church in North America. Instead, it relies on conferences, congregations, and individuals for support.

MCGB's action raises questions more symbolic than practical. I find them important questions nonetheless: What does it mean when the board that oversees the largest North American Mennonite body cuts funding—even token funding—to the worldwide Mennonite church? What does it say when MCGB, the group that discerns the direction and future of one of the wealthiest Mennonite groups in the world, has to keep $2,000 from the international Mennonite church so it can more nearly balance its own budget?

"The North American Mennonite Church has been the most stingy in its support of Mennonite World Conference," a friend e-mailed me after reading our report about the MCGB action in the Nov. 26 issue. "And I can't figure out why." Last year, for example, the Mennonite Church of North America gave only about half of what MWC asked.

"Are we so parochial?" the e-mail continued. "We don't seem to be, because we travel for vacations and for mission abroad. How can we in North America come to treasure the resources available to us from the worldwide church?"

It's not the General Board that can or should answer those questions. Before we critique its action, we must remember MCGB was simply doing one of the things the church has asked it to do: be a fiscally responsible structure. At its November meeting, the board learned that all but three of its 21 member conferences are behind in their contributions. The reason? "Congregations are giving us less," conference representatives said in report after report to the board.

You hear the same these days from congregations: less money from members. Some churches that for years have prided themselves on meeting their budgets and sending on hefty contributions for churchwide work are themselves facing red ink for the first time in their history.

So what do I tell them when I get to India? What do I say when a sister or brother from another country—particularly a country with far fewer resources than we have in the U.S. or Canada—asks, "Are we important to you?" Likely (I hope) they'll be too polite to ask. But I suspect the questions will be there, hanging out behind the scenes at India 1997: How important is the worldwide Mennonite church to North Americans? Is international mutual encouragement and accountability something we treasure? Treasure enough to put it into our personal, congregational, conference, and denominational budgets, even if that means cutting some of our own programs?

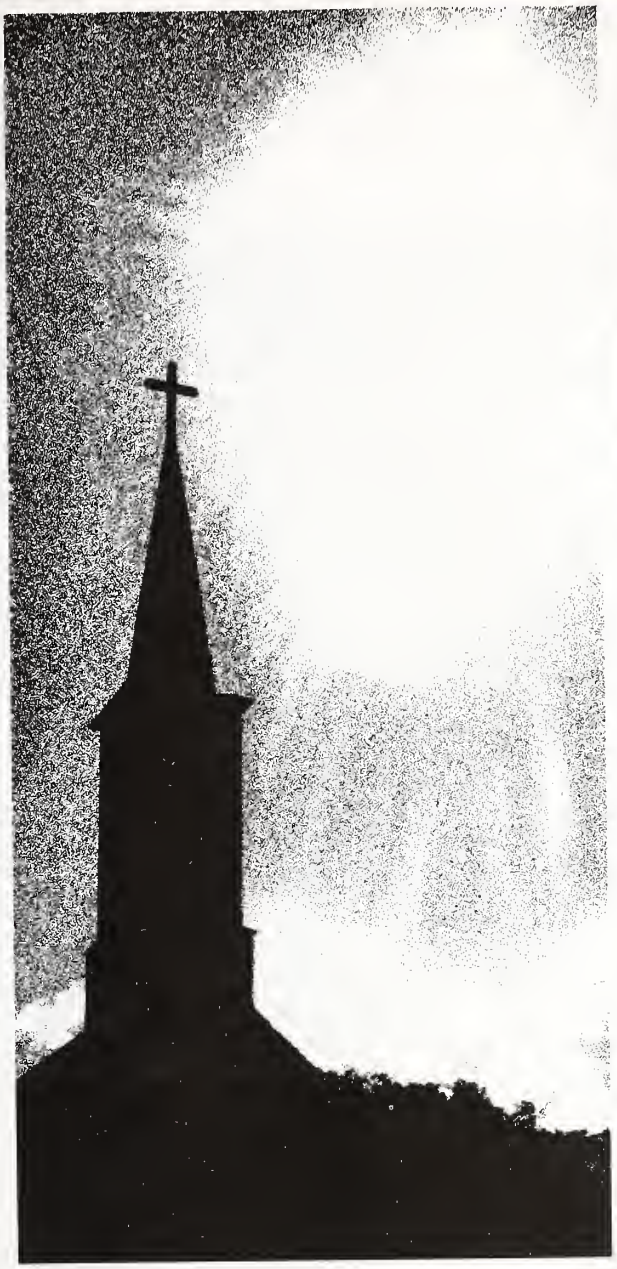
"Budgets show our priorities," one member reminded the others as the General Board struggled to balance its budget. Jesus put it this way: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21).

Exactly where is that for North American Mennonites today? That's a question I wish I didn't have to take with me to India.—*jlp*

December 24, 1996

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH



The battle has raged for some 1,600 years—between the revelry of Saturnalia and the reverence of Christmas, between an emphasis on the physical and one on the spiritual. And it's a battle that continues today.

Shall we celebrate the sun or the Son?

If we would reinstate experiences of worship in our Christmas celebrations, we might not miss the 'invented' traditions that leave us exhausted the day after.

by Larry Augsburger

Every year during the December holiday season, many of us become concerned about the loss of the spiritual meaning of Christmas—and about the battle between the "reason for the season" and the "call of the mall." The concept that Christmas is being corrupted assumes, however, that this holiday was virtuously observed for centuries until the last half of the 20th century; then modern Americans, for some reason, destroyed its purity.

In her book *Christmas in America: A History* (Oxford University Press, 1995), Penne Restad explodes that nativity naïveté. She reports that the early Christians had no interest in the birthday of Jesus; they were so focused on Jesus' return that they didn't care when Jesus was born. They were looking forward, not backward. It wasn't until the fourth century, when the hope of the immediate return was fading and Christianity was accepted as the state religion of Rome, that the church began to commemorate the birth of Jesus.

Restad reports that by the middle of the fourth century, the church had declared the

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Julie Litwiller:
Because Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes 5

Valerie Weaver:
A Nicaraguan Mennonite tries to be a 'presence of Jesus' 6

Bob Buxman:
If there just weren't hens and frogs . . . 8

Over 6,000 MCC Christmas boxes on way to former Yugoslavia 9

Americans came to attach a significance to Christmas because the new nation was 'holiday poor'; Christmas filled a vacuum in the American national holiday experience.

winter solstice to be the date of Jesus' birth. Although no one had any idea when Jesus was born, the church chose that date because it served a strategic purpose: combating the pagan celebration of Saturnalia, which ran from December 17 through January 1. During that celebration, people feasted and reveled with the most emphasis coming on December 25. In the calendar then in use, this date was the winter solstice. On that day celebrations honored the solar god, Mithras, who after six months of declining was beginning his great ascendancy to the summer solstice. By declaring the birth of Jesus to be December 25, the church tried to provide a Christian alternative to the popularity of Saturnalia and Mithras.

Restad says, "The concurrence of the two celebrations gave the church an opportunity to turn elements of the Saturnalia itself to Christian ends. For example, it used the creation of the sun the center of the Saturnalia, to reinforce and symbolize frequent scriptural and doctrinal imagery of God as the sun, and of Jesus' role as Son of God. The creation of Christmas was thus a measure of Christianity's growing power, challenging the crowds enjoying Saturnalian revelry to join the once secretive Christians in a celebration not of the birth of the sun, but rather the birth of Jesus, the Son of God."

Thus began the battle which has raged for 1,600 years—between the revelry of Saturnalia and the reverence of Christmas, between the emphasis on the physical (the sun) and the emphasis on the spiritual (the Son). Unfortunately, revelry has frequently won over reverence. Restad gives some examples of the revelry with which the holiday has been celebrated, including shooting guns, setting off explosions, drinking to excess, and mumming (people dressed in outlandish costumes). There are evidences of this revelry in the Christmas song "Here We Come A-wassailing," which refers to carousing throughout the community; people beset by the wassailers were expected to provide more liquor to grease the proceedings.

Revelry like this is the reason that some Christian groups have resisted the celebration of Christmas. They have problems, not so much with the idea of celebrating the birth of Jesus, but rather with the unredeemed elements of Saturnalia that have never been purged from the celebration. The Puritan immigrants to America were examples of people with this orientation, whereas the Episcopal settlers in the south, along with some of the middle colony settlers from other areas of Europe, did observe Christmas with a wide variety of customs and traditions.

Restad says that the reason Americans came to attach such significance to Christmas is that America is "holiday poor." Americans "invented" Christmas to fill a vacuum in the American national experience. In contrast to other countries with centuries of history and a rich mixture of church and state, early America had few holidays to commemorate. Independence Day was the only national day of celebration. Thanksgiving was seen as a New England holiday and wasn't viewed positively by southerners. Christmas, with its religious ties that transcended regionalism and its sweet story of nativity which transcended doctrinal disputation, was a natural choice. As the Puritanism of New England mellowed, America pressed Christmas to its breast as its major national holiday.

Restad follows the development of many of the themes of Christmas, showing how Americans either invented or adapted traditions to shape a uniquely American holiday. For example, much of the legend of Santa Claus springs straight from the famous poem, "The Night Before Christmas" written in 1822 by Clement Clark Moore, who was—surprisingly—a seminary professor of biblical languages. He created several of the elements of the Santa Claus legend, such as the sleigh drawn by flying reindeer and Santa's arrival and departure through the chimney. The visual image of Santa Claus was shaped largely by Thomas Nast, the 19th-century political cartoonist who engaged in what Restad calls "a 30-year project to create an entire world for Santa."

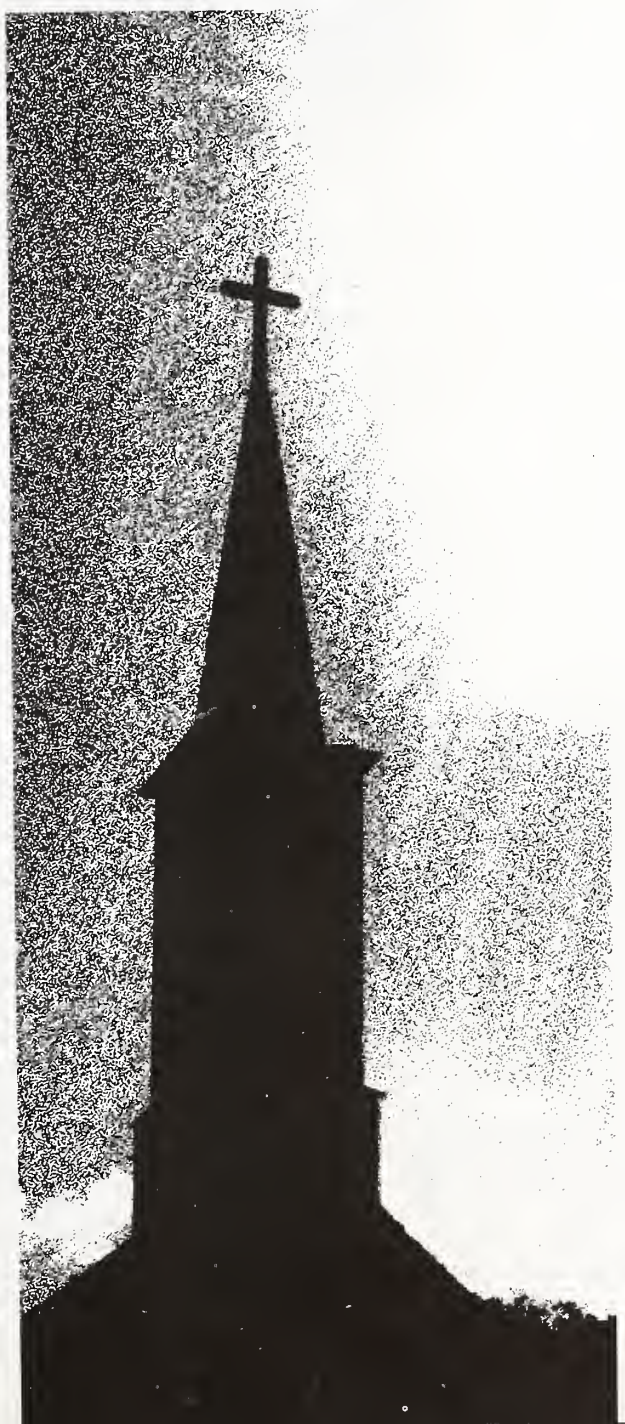
Initially, gifts were first given by those of higher social status to those of lower social standing, such as masters to servants or slaves and parents to children. The unique American contribution was to shape gift-giving into a reciprocal exchanging of gifts, which, of course, greatly increased the level of giving.

More gift-giving occurred, Restad observes, because the holiday was developing at the same time that America was evolving as the world's first consumer-driven economy, a result of the first and second industrial revolutions. Christmas was seen as a way to create a

market for the material goods which the rapidly enlarging industrial complex was capable of producing. In fact, Restad says, "Children who expected gifts from Santa and parents learned from an early age 'to take and to receive,' a custom that folklorist Alan Dundes has suggested is 'important training' for life in a capitalistic society."

The development of new capitalists proved to be oppressive, however, and by the last quarter of the 19th century, many were commenting about the burdensome excesses of the holiday. Calls were going out to "dematerialize" Christmas—an uncomfortable reminder of the 1,600-year-old issue of whether in this midwinter celebration we pay more homage to the physical (the sun) or the spiritual (the Son).

So are we celebrating Christmas or Saturnalia? Has the celebration of the birth of God's Son transcended the revelry of celebrating the end of the sun's annual decline and the beginning of its move toward the summer solstice—or has Saturnalia won but we don't realize it? To what extent does our use of the physical as an expression of spiritual celebration shade over to the use of the physical for the sake of itself alone?



If the holiday has been "invented" by our American culture with market-driven rather than spiritual motives, we must ask, "What attitude should we have today toward the celebration of Christmas?"

1. We should ask of each tradition which defines our Christmas, "Does this tradition spring more from the 'sun side' or the 'Son side' of our midwinter celebration?"

2. We must ask, "Is this tradition a blessing or a burden?" If it is a burden, whether purchasing and giving gifts, cooking and baking, sending greetings, or decorating, we can choose to relieve ourselves of the burden.

3. We need to realize that we can take control of this holiday. All our traditions were invented and adapted, and we don't have to use any of them. There is nothing holy or sacred about any "invented" traditions.

4. We need to rediscover—or discover for the first time—the value of worship as a way of celebrating the "Son side" of the celebration. As a person who grew up in congregations which did not hold Christmas Eve services, I am a latecomer to this tradition. In the early days of my ministry, I resisted instituting it in the churches I served. But I have come to deeply appreciate this break in the rush of giving gifts and eating food, a break to worship the one in whose honor we say we celebrate the day.

In fact, if we would reinstate active experiences of worship and wonder during this season, we might not miss some of the "invented" traditions which can burden our Decembers and leave us exhausted each December 26.

Larry Augsburger, West Liberty, Ohio, is pastor of Oak Grove Mennonite Church. He also serves as a Gospel Herald *editorial consultant.*

Millard Lind taught Mennonites that God fights his own battles. We don't have to appoint ourselves to be God's warriors. Then John Howard Yoder taught us that appointing ourselves as God's warriors can lead us astray. We try to grasp a role in history that hasn't been assigned to us, one that belongs to God. Our self-appointed role becomes a "principality and power" to us.

In this light, we need to look at attempts to define our Mennonite identity. In ***My Vision for the Mennonite Church*** (Oct. 8), Arnold Cressman says that we are the people of peace and justice. In his editorial, *What I Wonder About on Stewardship Sunday* (Oct. 29), J. Lorne Peachey says that a decade or so ago we were the people of the simple lifestyle.

In the 1950s and 1960s, weren't we the people who brought relief to suffering humanity? And before that, weren't we the people who lived plainly, apart from the world?

These are all part of the fabric of our Mennonite heritage. But each generation or decade grabs at a thread and tries to make it central. We should continue living simply, making peace, and offering relief to the suffering. But appointing ourselves as God's peacemakers, simple livers, and relief workers could lead us into battles that God doesn't want us to fight.

Our identity comes from Jesus only, and he needs no help from us to give us definition. Let us follow him wherever he leads us.

Tom Miller
Tirane, Albania

I want to thank Paulus Widjaja for his courageous and scathingly honest article, ***Let Us Get to the Shore, and Then I'll Tell You My History*** (Nov. 12). I also commend *Gospel Herald* for having the courage to make this a cover article.

During my meager three-month experience with Goshen (Ind.) College's Study Service Term (SST) in Indonesia, I learned many hard lessons from the Indonesian and Chinese Mennonites about the true meanings of community; listening; valuing people above numbers, statistics, and money; and reaching impersonal goals.

I hope Widjaja's dream for a respectful partnership between the southern and northern churches comes true. Perhaps someday soon, we will begin to send missionaries from Indonesia and other southern churches as pastors to the Northern Hemisphere. They could teach us lessons of love, mutual respect, and a deeper spirituality.

Marija Dubrick
Colorado Springs, Colo.

In ***Letting the Whole Field Grow with Patience*** (Nov. 26), Jason Kuniholm helpfully calls for patience in relating to members who are sinning and turning into tares. However, I find his use of the Bible confusing.

In Matt. 13:34-30, 36-43, Jesus says, "The field is the *world*," not just the church. The "good seed" are the "children of the kingdom," believers, the church, those who willingly obey God. The "weeds" are the "children of the evil one," nonbelievers, disobedient to the Lord. At the last judgment, God will purge evildoers from the kingdom —which includes the whole world.

This parable and its explanation assure us God will judge evil and evildoers in his own timing. Hence, our crusades or violence to uproot the wicked in the world are wrong. But this does not justify neglect in "keeping house" in the church. In Matt. 18:15-20, Jesus tells us that the church is to take definite steps for restoring the sinning member.

As led by Scripture and the Spirit, the church is entrusted with discerning what is right and wrong. Jesus outlines how we are to care and offer forgiveness and restoration to the erring member. But after due process, if the sinning member persists in disobedience and does not listen and repent, then the church is to accept that sinning person's choice to be separated from church membership.

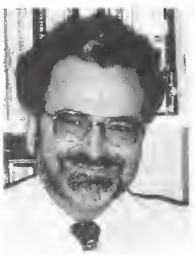
Since Jesus eats with tax collectors and Gentiles, he shows us how to be friends with sinners. But neither Jesus nor Ezekiel (chap. 3) justifies tolerating obvious sin among members. We are expected to recognize sin: "You will know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:20).

Jesus does not call us to judge in the sense of being faultfinders, judgmental, eager to condemn (7:1-5). However, "caring accountability to one another in the community of faith is another matter" (see Gardner, *Matthew*, Believers Church Bible Commentary).

S. David Garber
Scottdale, Pa.

***My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, . . . the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.*—Luke 1:47-50**

Gospel Herald



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Hope in Jesus' birth:

Because Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes

by Julie Litwiller

Amy was nine months pregnant and looked every day of it. She no longer walked but waddled, and getting up from a comfortable chair was next to impossible. Her back and feet ached, and her legs and ankles were swollen to twice their normal size. It was in this condition that the 20-year-old homeless woman wandered the streets of New Orleans.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. So, Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child (from Luke 2:2-5).

Mary, nine months pregnant, sitting atop a bony-backed donkey all day. Clop, clop, clopping along, asking Joseph could they please stop one more time to empty her now tiny bladder, feeling the aching pain in her back and glancing down at her swollen feet as day and night her body bore the weight of the little one inside.

Amy came and went at Covenant House, never staying for more than a week. Her addiction kept calling her back to the streets. She would wander around until she was so tired and hungry that she would return again to safety at Covenant House. Last week she came back, ready to deliver. She was taken a few blocks away to Charity Hospital, the hospital willing to serve the indigent. It is far from a warm and welcoming atmosphere—cement walls and floors, people hurrying around, emergencies rolling in. It was there that baby Terrence was born.

***While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn* (from Luke 2:6-7).**

Maybe Mary began labor while riding a donkey, trying hard to be strong and hold back the pain that gripped her insides. At long last they arrived at the place where the baby would be born—a stable reeking of urine and dung. The ground was hard, hay was scattered about. The stable door creaked and cobwebs clung to the corner. It was there that baby Jesus was born.

Baby Terrence came into the world crying, announcing his arrival to the doctor and nurses. Amy had no one to call, no special person to share the excitement with, only the busy hospital staff. But baby Terrence was born today. He was washed and dried and his little feet stamped on a certificate, proving his birth and existence. But baby Terrence also received another certificate stamped all too soon—a certificate announcing death. Terrence was born with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Baby Jesus came into the world crying, announcing his arrival to those around. There were no familiar faces around with whom Mary and Joseph could celebrate this new life, only the stable animals and strangers. But baby Jesus was born today. He was wiped and wrapped in a blanket. He would be counted in the census—another official life. But he would also soon be counted among the dead.

Jesus entered a world of hate, violence, and oppression. He felt the blow of prejudice and injustice. He knew how it feels to be homeless and alone. He knew how cold the world can be. Because he knew, because he was born in that manger and lived on earth, we have hope.

We have hope that one day violence and hatred will be no more and that all people will be treated equally. We have hope that one day baby Terrence will be held gently in the arms of a Father who loves him.

Julie Litwiller is a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer at Covenant House, a shelter for homeless teenagers in New Orleans. Litwiller, from Lancaster, Pa., is a member of Riverside Mennonite Church in AuGres, Mich.

In the middle of a gang-controlled barrio:

A Nicaraguan Mennonite tries

Alongside the capacity for violence in every person is the capacity for good. Everyone has the potential to change—that is the mystery of the reign of God.

by Valerie Weaver

Four young men slouch beside their dice game on the porch of a house next to a gang headquarters in Ciudadela, a Managuan barrio. Someday they will be the fierce and desperate members of the gang that controls this neighborhood. Today, though, they still droop arms over their gangly teenager legs and peer at passersby with eyes fogged and vacant from the glue they have sniffed.

Their older brothers and cousins in the gang have been on a drinking spree since Friday, say the two Catholic sisters who live down the street; now it's early Tuesday afternoon. As they pass the gang house, the sisters cross to the other side of the street and tell their visitors to do the same.

Carlos Avalos, a young Nicaraguan Mennonite who has recently moved into Ciudadela, keeps watch for unsuspecting popcorn sellers or shoe shiners, warning them to turn around rather than walk past the gang house. "It's too dangerous; they don't know what they're doing anymore and will steal anything from anyone," he says.

Invited and hired by the North American Franciscan sisters who live and work here, Carlos says his main task is forming friendships with the members of the gang and others, like the young men lounging on the porch. "When I first came here, I was very frightened," he says. "Since then, there's been a building of confidence and relationships."

That mounting trust doesn't mean that he never feels threatened. Carlos, a member of the Fraternidad Conference of Nicaraguan Mennonites, reports that just that day a gang member had asked him for five córdoba and pulled a knife on him when Carlos refused.

But violence is no stranger for him. Carlos grew up in an environment in which "hitting a child is as normal as taking a drink of water," he says. He also fought as a Sandinista soldier in the war, during which time "we were taught not to think."

The epidemic of violence that plagues his country was, he says, "passed down though the generations from the days of the *conquistadores*." Carlos adds that violence now takes the shape of not only war, but drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, and *machismo*. "Thousands of years of violence are not just erased in a couple of days," he says with a tired smile.

Nicaragua's political situation, which Carlos describes as historically "a war, then a break, then a war, then a break . . ." is often classified these days as peaceful. There's been a relatively smooth (though disputed) transfer of power in the last two elections, and the blood-drenched decade of Sandinista-*contra* fighting is over.

But something else is just beginning. "Managua has all the conditions that add up to an explosion of the [gang] problem," says Managua police chief Pedro Aguilar, quoted in the *Christian Science Monitor*. "Poverty affects a majority of our kids. Schooling and recreational opportunities are lacking. The war left the country with a more violent disposition and a greater tendency for people to unite in small groups."

The police have identified 71 gangs in Managua, up from a dozen in 1992. The crime rate has swelled 500 percent over the past decade, mostly since the civil war ended in 1990 and partly because of gangs. Aguilar says that approximately 1,500 people belong to gangs in the Managua, though nongovernmental organizations working

to be a 'presence of Jesus'

with gangs say the number is really much higher.

The barrio where Carlos and the Franciscan sisters live testifies to this wider social dilemma. Having sprung up since the war ended, the neighborhood of makeshift shacks and gullied walkways is saturated with mistrust and agitation, say the Catholic sisters, Michelle L'Allier and Carmen Barsody. They sleep with earplugs each night because the noise of domestic arguments drifts through their screens. The soy kitchen and preschool which they helped community residents to establish was robbed of food and supplies eight days ago. The women who run the nutrition and education program say there's no question who the culprits are: the gang members.

Michelle and Carmen, whose work involves helping neighbors who are abused, initiating faith-based reflection groups, and making their house a safe place and a "ministry of presence" in the barrio, say they invited Carlos to work as a "pastor among his people." Michelle says that as foreigners and as women, they didn't have entrance into certain situations. The two women also plan to leave in about a year, and continuity of the "presence of peace" in the neighborhood is important, they say.

"I am here to try to find a way to be the presence of Jesus in this environment," says Carlos, who has worked in the barrio for one year but only recently moved into a house down the street from the sisters. Working as a team, Carlos says their goal is to "walk with these people and find a way to hope."

His work with the Catholic sisters ("holy mothers," as Carlos jokingly refers to them) has pushed him to the edge of his own Mennonite church, in which some believe—along with many Latin American evangelicals—that Catholics aren't Christians. The churches' inability to live with each other and deal with conflict is one manifestation of how hard it is to unlearn violence, says Carlos. "We don't know how to express it, so it explodes."

But Carlos says he believes that alongside the capacity for violence within every person, including himself, exists a capacity for good. "I believe human beings have the potential to change," he says, gazing out the door toward the dice players, whose criminal futures seem as confirmed as their country's warring past.

"I keep finding new mysteries in the reign of God," he adds. "I want to keep finding more and more."

Valerie Weaver, Scottdale, Pa., is assistant editor of Gospel Herald *and a member of Kingview Mennonite Church. She spent the first two weeks of November 1996 in Nicaragua and Honduras as part of a Mennonite Central Committee East Coast learning tour.*

Carlos Avalos (right) talks with Michelle L'Allier (far left) and Carmen Barsody, two North American Franciscan sisters, in their home in Ciudadela, a Managuan barrio. Carlos, a Nicaraguan Mennonite, recently moved down the street from the sisters, who invited him to come and work with members of the gang that controls the barrio. The neighborhood of makeshift shacks and gullied walkways is full of mistrust and agitation, the three say, and violence is an everyday part of their neighbors' lives. Carlos, Michelle, and Carmen say their main mission is to provide a "presence of peace" in Ciudadela and to "walk with these people and find a way to hope."

One holy night:

If there just weren't hens and frogs

I was privileged to be there that night in that 'stable' because Jesus was there. He was among us, incarnate in the Mennonite brothers and sisters around me.

by Bob Buxman

I slept in a stable one night, the one where Jesus was born. Well, it wasn't really where he was born; it was in Nicaragua. And it wasn't really a stable, but after spending the night in it, it reminded me of one.

It was actually a very humble Mennonite home that also serves as a church on a hill close to Juigalpa, a community about two hours from Managua. The building was a typical rural Central American structure—clay tile roof, mud and brick walls, dirt floor with a variety of animals running freely in and out. It was beautiful in its own way. I felt honored to be there with my Nicaraguan brothers and sisters in the faith.

I was helping with a two-day seminar on Anabaptism. It was the end of the first day and we were all tired. We went to bed about 9:30, lying on foam pads on the dirt floor of the small living room. The women slept in the bedroom.

We all slept in our clothes. I was grateful for the small blessing of no mosquitoes. I slept well until about 3:00 a.m., when the first of the women rose to start cooking. She noisily chopped kindling with a machete and occasionally returned to the bedroom to enlist another woman to help her with breakfast.

I fell asleep again until I felt something run across my body. A scorpion? I bolted up, grabbed my flashlight, and examined my mattress. Just a frog! The man next to me woke and asked what was wrong. He laughed, got up, and shooed it away. It came back a few minutes later. They said the frog probably just liked *gringos*!

The frog and I went back to sleep again. Sometime before 4:30 a.m., the two hens sleeping among the mattresses with their chicks began waking up, peeping and clucking—quietly at first and then crescendoing as they anticipated the first light. Finally, one of the women working in the kitchen came to shoo them out. They went out all right—straight over mattresses and the sleeping *hermanos* (brothers). The sister giggled all the way back to the kitchen.

At 4:30 a.m., in just an inkling of light, most of the men were awake, resting on their elbows and energetically engaged in a discussion.

Such is the way of the *campesinos* (poor farmers). And such is the way of stables. Jesus' first night was probably something like that for Joseph and Mary, among such a people and such a commotion—minus foam pad and flashlight.

In fact, the reason I felt so privileged to be there was because Jesus was there. He was among us, incarnate in the Mennonite brothers and sisters gathered. It was indeed a holy night.

Bob Buxman of Dallas, Ore., served as pastor of Dallas Mennonite Brethren Church prior to beginning his work with Mennonite Central Committee in Central America.

'Still coming in like cows in a rainstorm!'

Over 6,000 Christmas boxes on their way to refugees in former Yugoslavia

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Compassion fatigue? Holiday "humbugs"? Some international aid "doctors" may diagnose donors with these ailments, but the virus apparently hasn't hit Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) supporters.

Since early October, MCC material resource staff in the United States and Canada have been scrambling to prepare for shipment a deluge of Christmas food boxes—destined for refugees in the former Yugoslavia. Individuals, families, classes, and church groups have all gotten into the act.

Hoping to ship 4,000 boxes, by mid-November MCC staffperson Kevin King reported 5,600 Christmas boxes had already arrived at MCC warehouses and that they were "still coming in like cows in a rainstorm!"

The rainstorm has abated to a trickle now, but 6,402 boxes are already crossing the Atlantic and should be distributed to Bosnian refugees by MCC partner agency, Bread of Life, in time for Jan. 7 Orthodox Christmas celebrations. Each box, which costs about $50 U.S. / $68 Can. to put together, should provide basic staples for a family of four for a month.

Similar boxes of supplies sent by MCC in the past have been warmly received by refugees, many of whom wrote lengthy thank-you letters to Bread of Life. "We're overwhelmed to know we are not forgotten, that someone cares about us" was the letters' common theme.

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People took great care in packing the Christmas boxes, report MCC material resource staff, and many added personal touches to the "core inventory" of food and toiletries—holiday cards with personal messages, children's drawings, family photos, candy, toys, crayons, or other gifts.

From the messages and drawings, "it was obvious many children and families had been involved" in the project, says Fern Gerber, who helped repack and seal the boxes for shipment at the Ephrata (Pa.) MCC Material Resources Center. "One family with adult children decided to give food boxes to refugees rather than exchange Christmas presents," she adds.

MCC personnel heard of other families in which the children had agreed to fewer gifts under their own Christmas trees in order to give to others in need. A Christian school in Bakersfield, Calif., embraced "Boxes for Bosnia" as an all-school project. Each grade brought in one of the items. In an outdoor celebration, the students assembled the boxes and loaded them onto a truck, which the principal personally drove to MCC's resource center in Reedley, Calif.

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A group of Mennonites in Hinton, Va., purchased and assembled the contents of 500 boxes and added dried apples to each, something they prepare in their community. And a non-churchgoing golf partner of a member of Erisman Mennonite Church in Manheim, Pa., became so enthused about the project that he and his wife not only assembled a box but also accompanied an Erisman Sunday school class to the Ephrata resource center for an evening of packing.

"The response [to this drive] was so quick and so much greater than anticipated," says Lois Flickinger, a staffperson at the Ephrata center.

Her remarks are echoed by Willie Thiessen of West Coast MCC, where more than 500 food boxes were gathered. In Ontario, several church groups, including a youth group, volunteered to help ready the boxes for shipping. Of the 913 boxes shipped from Ontario—along with 10 bales of comforters—400 came from Manitoba, 100 from Saskatchewan, and 413 from Ontario.—*Emily Will*

Leah Bomberger (left), Andrew Bair (middle), and Brent Stoltzfus, students at Locust Grove Mennonite School, Smoketown, Pa., help to prepare supplies for shipment to people in need worldwide. By mid-November, 5,600 Christmas boxes had arrived at MCC warehouses for people in the former Yugoslavia.

Brazil Mennonites help Zairian church planting

Brasilia, Brazil (AIMM-GCMC-MWC)—Two Mennonite churches in Brazil have financially contributed to an international missions effort for the first time ever.

The Samambaia Mennonite Church and the Ceilandia Mennonite Church raised $622 through offerings, a used clothing sale, and other special events for a church planting project among Rwandan refugees and local residents of eastern Zaire.

The three Mennonite conferences in Zaire have initiated this outreach in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, and Mennonite Brethren Missions / Services.

The two Brazilian congregations, with a total membership of 120, heard about the project from Commission on Overseas Mission workers Steve and Janet Plenert, who work in Brazil and formerly lived in Zaire.

"As a church, we are seeking to learn more about the teachings of Jesus," says Rosalina Vasco de Santana, interim pastor at the Samambaia congregation. "This project came at the right time because we were studying the themes of the global church and missions."—*Carla Reimer*

Zaire rebels head closer to provinces with Mennonites

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) continues to address needs in Africa's "Great Lakes" region—Burundi, Rwanda, and Zaire—where a complicated morass of conflict has left many people fearful and in need of food and shelter. MCC workers also report the Zairian rebels, who now control about one-sixth of Zaire, are heading closer to the provinces where many Zairian Mennonites live. They see "great potential for violence" there.

Krista Rigalo and Fidele Lumeya, MCC workers who left Bukavu, Zaire, in October, are now back in eastern Zaire planning for the distribution of the 50,000 blankets MCC is currently collecting in North America. The blankets are expected to arrive by March in Bukavu, where churches will distribute them to needy people.

Rigalo and Lumeya also hope to learn the fate of the Rwandan refugees who had lived in four MCC-supported camps around Bukavu. MCC workers fear the Interahamwe, Rwandan militia, have taken the refugees hostage.

The two workers will also check on ongoing MCC work in Bukavu, including forestry and peace programs. Despite the fighting, Zairians continued to work in the MCC tree nurseries.

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In Zaire, the rebels are moving west "more rapidly than anyone could have predicted," says Terry Sawatsky, codirector of MCC's Africa programs. The rebel ranks seem to be swelling. Many Zairians are displeased with the corrupt way President Mobutu has ruled their country since 1965. Some Zairians say they view any change in government as a positive turn of events.

About 90 percent of Zaire's estimated 140,000 Mennonites live in Kasai Oriental, Kasai Occidental, and Bandundu—three provinces that are bracing for the possibility of the rebels' arrival. Zairian Mennonites have seen other localized rebellions against the government in the past. But many are worried about the potential for violence currently, particularly if Zairian troops engage the rebels. Some are also concerned that Mennonite youth may be sympathetic to the rebels' cause. At the request of church leaders, MCC is sending Juan Jose Romero and Neal Blough to Zaire in February to conduct mediation and peace theology workshops. Romero is director of the Brussels Mennonite Peace Center; Blough is a Mennonite Board of Missions missionary in Paris.

Fidele Lumeya and Krista Rigalo are Mennonite Central Committee workers in eastern Zaire.

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Zaire's civil war has affected the entire region. In Burundi, MCC workers report an increase in killing, including 300 Hutu refugees recently murdered in a church. The two MCC workers there continue to hold peace and trauma healing workshops. In Tanzania, Rwandan refugees are leaving their camps to return to Rwanda. MCC currently has no personnel in these camps.

One million Rwandans have gone back to their country over the past two months. MCC has given $10,000 (U.S.) / $13,400 (Cdn.) to Rwandan churches to help returning families get reestablished. Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, MCC is helping supply lentils and oil, valued at $3.3 million (U.S.) / $4.5 million (Can.), designated for Rwandan and Burundian refugees. Since so many of these refugees have returned home, they will receive the food there instead of in eastern Zaire as originally planned.—*Pearl Sensenig*

Facing the powers. *Harrisonburg, Va. (MBM)*—Papa Michel Dossou, leader of the Universal Evangelical Church in Benin, is featured in a new video released by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), *Cloud of Witnesses: Facing the Powers*. As leader of one of Benin's largest evangelical bodies, Dossou works closely with MBM worker Rodney Hollinger-Janzen, who directs a Bible seminar in Cotonou.

Ethnic rivalries, the tumult of families torn apart by war, the terror of being next on an execution line: these headlines from Africa highlight this video that continues the *Cloud of Witnesses* series. It connects the contemporary issues confronting Christians in West Africa to questions faced by 16th-century Anabaptists. Interviews with Christians in Benin, Ivory Coast, and Liberia illustrate the struggles and thoughts of people who wrestle with a variety of powers today.

Jasper Ndaborlor, a Liberian church leader and former Senate chaplain, describes in the video a 1990 incident in which he had guns held to his head and chest as he faced possible execution. "They were hunting people down like animals," says Ndaborlor, who now is studying at Associated Mennonite Bible Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., in preparation for his return.

"Jesus becomes the power that can dominate all that evil and rescue people from fear," says Rodney Hollinger-Janzen, MBM worker in Benin since 1989. "That is the single most powerful message of the gospel in this culture." *Facing the Powers* is 49 minutes long.—*Melodie Davis*

Denver Mennonites plan to start six churches

Denver, Colo. (GCMC)—Mennonites in the Denver metropolitan area want to capitalize on the growing population in this region of Colorado.

The vision of the Mennonite leaders in this area was recognized by the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church when it named the Denver area as its 1996 "City on a Hill." This designation includes a $20,000 grant and staff support.

The Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference and Western District Conference are also providing primary support to the church planting in this region of Colorado.

'We want to expand the Anabaptist witness here, draw people in who are not a part of us.'

—Merv Dick

"Denver is a place of great opportunity," says Merv Dick, director of Mennonite Urban Ministry, a cooperative outreach project of the Denver area Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren churches. The Denver Regional Council of Governments predicts that the population will increase by 750,000 in the next 20 years.

"We want to expand the Anabaptist witness here. We want to look outward, draw people in who are not a part of us," says Dick. "We can do this by offering a wholistic approach to the gospel, one that does not overlook the dispossessed, the poor, people of color."

Based on a demographic study, the goal is to plant two Hispanic churches, one Hmong church, and three suburban churches by the year 2015. Dick says that it is a realistic plan, given the success of past church planting in this region.

Fourteen years ago, there were only three churches in Denver and the surrounding area within an hour's drive. Today, there are a total of six Mennonite congregations.

Shoua Moua left the Hmong congregation he started in Fresno, Calif., to start a church in Arvada, Colo. "I need to take responsibility for the larger ministry of the church. I can't focus only on one location," says Moua. He began offering a Bible study class for young families. Currently, an average of 20 adults and children attend.—*Carla Reimer*

Cultural smorgasbord. *Harrisonburg, Va. (EMU)*—Eastern Mennonite University students from Ethiopia sing and perform a traditional dance at an "international bazaar" held Nov. 16 in the Campus Center. Almost 30 countries were represented in the daylong celebrative event that featured exhibits, food, performances, and demonstrations such as Latin American drumming, Hawaiian quilting, Chinese knotting, origami, calligraphy, and a Japanese tea ceremony. There was also storytelling from the Middle East and Liberia, conflict transformation theater, and an international treasure hunt. Donations benefited EMU's International Student Organization.—*Jim Bishop*

Hebron University students continue peaceful protest

Hebron, West Bank (CPT)—Students carrying signs have been protesting the military closure of Hebron University.

On Dec. 9, hundreds of students occupied the university, which was closed on March 5 following a wave of suicide bombings in Israel. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) ordered the closure, although no one at the university was accused of connections to the bombings. Since Dec. 9, hundreds of students have stood outside the university on weekdays, holding signs in a nonviolent protest. The IDF has broken up at least one of the protests by using violence against the students.

Members of the Christian Peacemaker Team in Hebron talked with dozens of students, professors, and administrators at the university, who have expressed frustration at the closure but remain optimistic. "We'll continue to come every day," said one. "We'll see who gets tired first, us or the military."—*Wendy Lehman*

Florida counseling center plans expansion

Sarasota, Fla.—The small, unassuming building in the southwest corner of the Bahia Vista Mennonite Church's property in Sarasota, Fla., has outgrown its dimensions.

A new facility is being planned for the Charis Center, a professional counseling and family life education center. The counseling center is jointly owned by the Bahia Vista congregation and Southeast Mennonite Conference.

The location of the new building is still uncertain. The current building includes offices space, a conference room, a kitchen that is shared with the Bahia Vista youth group, and a library. The projected features of a new facility include offices for the seven licensed counselors with two offices designed especially for children and adolescents.

Glen Denlinger, executive director of the Charis Center, says that one advantage of staying at the same location on the Bahia Vista lot is that "it shows that the church is reaching out. Ninety percent of Charis Center's clients are from the community, 10 percent from Bahia Vista. It's a way of showing that Charis Center is church-based and that Christians are concerned about the emotional and relational health of the community." He also feels that keeping its location at the present area will keep Charis Center primarily a ministry rather than a business.—*Audrey Metz*

Goshen College student establishes youth group with gang members

Goshen, Ind. (GC)—The word "gang" evokes visions of barbaric animals committing violent acts. However, one Goshen (Ind.) College student found that an effective way to connect with gang members is to treat them as human beings rather than as societal outcasts.

Junior Juliett Castro, along with her fiancé Wilson Garcia, spent this past summer in Sunnyside, Wash., organizing and leading daily youth group meetings at First Baptist Church of Sunnyside, where Garcia's father is pastor. Castro and Garcia, with the sponsorship of Mennonite Central Committee, established the youth group, which consisted of people from the church and community, ranging in age from eight to 16 years.

'You lose on both sides.' Though its population is just over 10,000, Sunnyside is not a quiet rural town. "It's just a little town, but there are a lot of gangs," says Castro. She estimates that of the 13 kids who attended the group regularly, five or six of them were gang members. "Every day you hear gunshots," she says. "We never knew when someone was going to come by and shoot at the house."

Castro, a social work and Hispanic ministries major, says no youngster in the area is exempt from gang pressure. "You lose on both sides," she says, noting that if a kid is a gang member, he or she faces a violent lifestyle, and if one is not already involved, gang leaders will try to persuade the youth to join.

Though some members of the youth group attended church regularly, many of the gang members had not. The group participated in a retreat and several fundraisers, but their daily meetings concentrated on worship and sharing.

Castro and Garcia found that one way to keep the group's attention through four hours of worship and Bible study was to let the participants choose the themes. Selected topics included temptation, spirits, and the power of God versus the power of the devil. Castro says she and Garcia pledged confidentiality and the participants weren't afraid to share.

Although there was a feeling of friendship and trust between the group and its leaders, Castro and Garcia drew some boundaries. They welcomed open dialogue about life on the streets, but when a gang leader brought a gun to one of the meetings, Castro and Garcia told him and the rest of the group not to bring their world to a time of worship and sharing; however, the kids were never punished. "When someone comes up and gives you a gun, you can't punish them or you'll lose them," Castro says. "The reason why we never punished them is because they probably get that from other authorities and we wanted to get to know them as people."

Finding alternatives. Instead, Castro and Garcia tried to stress peaceful ways of living. "We wanted to teach them how to be nonviolent and how to find alternatives to what they had been taught by gang members."

By the end of the 10-week period, Castro noticed a significant change in some of the gang members' thinking. For example, Castro says at first the group was indifferent and preferred not to be a part of Sunday morning services, adding, "By the end, everyone wanted to lead Sunday worship."—*Matthew Smith*

Ethiopian church works toward accredited college

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia—The Meserete Kristos Church of Ethiopia and Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) are working to establish an accredited Christian college here.

A small Bible institute already exists, having opened in January 1994 to provide relevant and contextualized biblical training for pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders within Ethiopia. The first 10 students graduated in April 1996.

A major step toward an accredited degree-level program was taken in June when a new curriculum for an associate of arts degree in Christian ministries was introduced. A second compound has been rented to serve as a dormitory, and the former premises have space for another office and library.

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Eastern Mennonite Missions has assigned Carl and Vera Hansen to work with the Bible institute as consultants, and EMU has designated Carl as an adjunct professor to represent their interests in working out the details of this new relationship.

In the past two and one-half years, 50 new congregations have formed, according to Carl Hansen, "each needing trained leadership." Along with church leaders feeling the need to expand the institute because of this increasing demand, says Hansen, "it is important that some of these persons be trained in a school that is sensitive to and appreciative of denominational strengths."

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Hansen says that the school lacks basic facilities and that it will ultimately need to find an adequate plot of ground with appropriate facilities.

"When we realize that in a country of more than 56 million people, not one single Christian university or liberal arts college can be found, the vision becomes an urgent necessity," says Hansen.

The director of the Bible institute, Siyum Gebretsadik, is completing graduate work in Christian education in preparation for leadership in the future of the college. Hailu Cherenet, a student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, is preparing for a teaching role.

MCC Canada braces for major changes

Winnipeg, Man. (MCC Canada)—As the storm clouds of change loom on the horizon, the board of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada spent their last annual meeting measuring their audience and clarifying their future.

The meeting held on Nov. 28-29 was the last one before November 1997, when MCC Canada will shrink and the provincial MCCs will grow. Under an agreement made last year, the national organization will enable provinces to retain more of constituency donations.

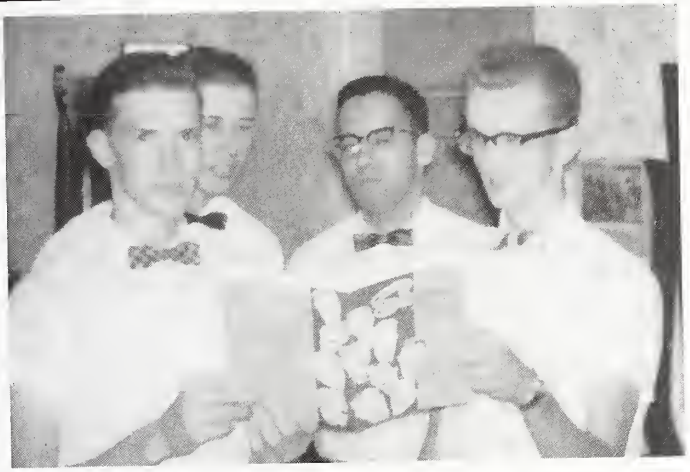
The 37 board members spent most of their time studying data from audience research. MCC Canada conducted a study of Mennonites and the general public in Manitoba. The research shows that over half of the general public in Canada has heard of MCC and that one third of the public shares many of the same values as Mennonites.

The executive committee put forth a five-year plan for MCC Canada starting September 1997. The four-page document gives the mission, program directions, and budget parameters. The plan proposes that most of the cuts come from Canadian programs and human resources. Most discussion at the meeting centered on MCC Canada's Native Concerns program.

The executive committee will revise the plan before presenting it for adoption to the board in November.—*Aiden Schlichting Enns*

- **East Africa workers recognized.** Six long-term mission workers who served in East Africa with Eastern Mennonite Missions were recognized on Nov. 30, with a combined 144 years of service between them. Ellin and Glen Brubaker, Elva Landis, and Barbara and Harold Reed completed their ministries with EMM in 1996 and were honored at a dinner and program in Salunga, Pa.

- **Rhodes Scholar named.** Hans Ackerman, member of Warwick River Mennonite Church, Newport News, Va., is one of 32 students nationwide named as Rhodes Scholars. Ackerman, son of Robby and Susan Ackerman, is the only winner from a Virginia school. The award pays for three years of study at England's Oxford University. Ackerman hopes to earn a doctorate through the zoology department with a focus on the study of infectious diseases, especially malaria. Ackerman is a senior at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.



'Still singing, after all these years.' *Hannibal, Mo. (MBM)*—In 1963, the Hannibal Voluntary Service Unit gave birth to a quartet: *(left to right)* Ivan Schlabach, James Kropf, Ervin Bontrager, and John Lehman. They often sang together while they served in their assignments with Mennonite Board of Missions.

Now living across the United States, the four men sang together again at a reunion of the VS unit here this summer *(below)*. Almost 50 people attended the reunion of the Hannibal unit, which opened in 1959 and closed in 1969.

Schlabach is a member of First Community Church, Ocala, Fla.; Kropf serves as pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz.; Bontrager is a member of Village Seven Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs, Colo.; and Lehman is a member of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

- **Goshen awarded $1.6 million.** Lilly Endowment, Inc., has awarded Goshen (Ind.) College (GC) more than $1.6 million. The Endowment recently began a campaign to encourage more Indiana high school graduates to go on and graduate from Indiana colleges and universities and find employment within the state. GC prepared a proposal that includes increasing the number of new Indiana students to 300 by 2001, funding the start-up of a daycare center on campus, and increasing the number of GC students who find employment in Indiana within a year of graduation.

- **Adriel centennial celebrated.** The Adriel School, West Liberty, Ohio, a center for children with developmental handicaps, and their families, recently celebrated 100 years of operation. A program of sacred music was given three times in November to commemorate the work of the school, sponsored by area churches and the Ohio Mennonite Conference.—*Celia Lehman*

- **Worship teams available.** Two worship teams from Goshen (Ind.) College are offering drama and music programs to youth and adult groups in church and conference settings. They are available for weekend programs February-April 1997. Scheduling is available through Sheldon Burkhalter at 219 535-7536.

- **Missionary transitions:**

Kristin Borntrager, Putney, Ky., began a one-year Voluntary Service term in Harlingen, Tex., with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

Joy Kraybill, Elizabethtown, Pa., began a nine-month MBM Voluntary Service term in Richmond, Va.

Philip Landis, Salem, Ore., has begun a two-year MBM Voluntary Service term in La Jara, Colo.

Chris Miller, Kalona, Iowa, began a one-year term of MBM Voluntary Service in Washington, D.C.

Carrie Purnhagen, Piqua, Ohio, began a two-year MBM Voluntary Service term in La Jara, Colo.

Kendall Ruth, Perkasie, Pa., began a one-year MBM Voluntary Service term in Washington, D.C.

Lisa Wideman, Wallenstein, Ont., has begun a one-year term of Voluntary Service with MBM in La Jara, Colo.

Anthony Yoder, Wellman, Iowa, began a one-year term of MBM Voluntary Service in La Jara, Colo.

- **Coming events:**

Music and worship leaders weekend, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Jan. 10-12. "Welcoming New Christians" is the theme. Leaders include Ken Nafziger, Marlene Kropf, and June Alliman Yoder. More information available from 412 423-2056.

- **New books:**

Introduccion a la Historia Menonita, the Spanish edition of Cornelius Dyck's *Introduction to Mennonite History,* is now available. Contact SEMILLA, Apdo. 371-I, Montserrat Zona 7, Cd. Guatemala, Guatemala; phone 502 471-7790.

Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970, Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community by Paul Toews is the fourth and final volume of the "Mennonite Experience in America" series. Toews examines ways progressive Mennonites have slowed their absorption into American culture through creating institutional systems, refining ideologies, building ecumenical alliances, and developing service and mission. Available from Herald Press, 800 245-7894.

- **New resources:**

Let All Within Us Praise! Dramatic Resources for Worship, by Patricia Shelly, contains 45 Scripture-based readers' theater scripts and sixteen songs. Includes background and rehearsal notes for each reading and suggestions for worship planning. Available from Faith & Life Press at 800 743-2484.

- **Job openings:**

Director of external programs and continuing education, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Responsibilities include administrative oversight and research development for theological and pastoral education and distance learning pro-

grams, and coordination of continuing education events on campus and locally. Full-time position begins Sept. 1. Requirements include pastoral experience and a Master of Divinity degree. Send letter of application and résumé to President's Office, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517.

Faculty position in biology, Goshen (Ind.) College. Responsibilities include teaching entry-level biology for biology majors, a biology course for nonmajors, a genetics course, and other courses to be determined. Qualifications include a Ph.D. and teaching excellence. Tenure-track position begins August 1997. More information from John D. Nyce, interim academic dean, at 219 535-7503; email: johndn@goshen.edu

Faculty position in spiritual formation and worship, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Responsibilities include coordinating the campus spiritual formation program, leading seminars for students in spiritual direction, teaching, and serving on the worship planning committee. Half-time position begins Aug. 15. Requirements include Ph.D. or doctor of ministry degree in spiritual formation or candidacy for such, and experience in spiritual direction and teaching. Send letter of application and résumé to Dean's Office, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517.

Manager and guest host, Menno House, New York City. Half-time, live-in position for individual or couple begins June 1. More information and applications are available from 212 673-7970; email: nymcc@aol.com

• **Change of address:**
Colleen and Pablo Fast, CP 2955, 69001-970 Manaus AM, Brazil.

NEW MEMBERS

Bethel, Wayland, Iowa: Marguerite Dare, Leon Iwanowski, Phil Slabaugh, and Brenda Slabaugh.

East Union, Kalona, Iowa: Benji Miller.

Line Lexington, Pa.: Missy Cassel, Beth Guengerich, Al Karp, Kathleen Karp, Jim Carminito, Sheila Carminito, and Patty Schaffer.

BIRTHS

Blum, Janet Landis and Robert Jr., Telford, Pa., Cozette Landis (third child), Dec. 1.

Bontrager, Tonya Ramer and Evan, Monee, Ill., Annika Ramer (first child), Oct. 6.

Burdette, Ulonda Miller and Jim, Great Falls, Mont., Sara Lynn (first child), Nov. 24.

Higgins, Stacey Aby and Bill, Portland, Ore., Julina Kaitlyn (third child), Nov. 5.

Hostetler, Michelle and Keith, Iowa City, Iowa, Celia Marie (first child), Dec. 3.

Miller, Carrie and Steve, Kidron, Ohio, Deziray Marie (first child), Nov. 28.

Schlosser, Jolene Hunsberger and Jack Clemens, Quinton, Va., Josiah Smith (third child), Oct. 24.

MARRIAGES

Cortez-Dufrene: Ryan Cortez, Des Allemands, La. (Des Allemands), and Darlene Dufrene, Waggaman, La., Oct. 19, by Robert O. Zehr.

Gascho-McKay: Stefan Gascho, Tucson, Ariz., and Kathi McKay, Tucson, Ariz., Nov. 30, by Roy Bender.

Harbison-Miller: Jeremy Harbison, Brighton, Iowa (Methodist), and Julie Miller, Wayland, Iowa (Sugar Creek), Nov. 23, by Ruben Chupp.

Schrock-Slagell: Richard Schrock, Foosland, Ill. (East Bend), and Amy Slagell, Champaign, Ill. (Bethel), Oct. 26, by Calvin Kaufman and Joe Pendleton.

DEATHS

Baer, Dorothy Musgrave, 79, Polo, Ill. Born: May 6, 1917, Dixon, Ill., to James and Amanda Tyler Musgrave. Died: Nov. 22, 1996. Survivors—husband: Lowell Baer; children: Barbara Ebersole, Judith Long, Beth Shank, Dotti Ulrich, Lila Miller; sisters: Cecile Meyer, Lois Hamilton; 18 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 26, Science Ridge Mennonite Church, by James Ebersole.

Breneman, Roy W., 77, Mount Joy, Pa. Born: May 28, 1919, Manor Twp., Pa., to Christian E. and Lizzie Witmer Breneman. Died: Nov. 23, 1996, Mount Joy, Pa. Survivors—wife: Ruth Wenger Breneman; children: Charles, Douglas, Nancy Yoder, Marlane Martin; brothers and sister: Paul, Eli, Clifford, Grace Nolt; 10 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Elizabethtown Mennonite Church. Funeral: Nov. 26, Miller Funeral Home, by Richard H. Frank. Burial: Masonville Cemetery.

Cox, Vivian Burch, 81, Nappanee, Ind. Born: Dec. 2, 1914, Knozell, Mo. Died: Nov. 17, 1996, Elkhart, Ind. Survivors—daughter: Gloria Wilcoxson; brothers and sisters: Herlin and Burlin Burch, Thelma Gateley, Georgie Maynard, Bea Cox; 8 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Marvin Cox (husband) and Ruby Weldy (daughter). Funeral: Nov. 20, Holdeman Mennonite Church, by Dave Heusinkveld and Vernard Guengerich. Burial: South Whitley Cemetery.

Ebersole, Martha Lehman, 89, Lancaster, Pa. Born: May 6, 1907, Derry Twp. Pa., to Daniel and Lizzie Holdeman Lehman. Died: Nov. 23, 1996, Lancaster, Pa. Survivors—children: Jestena Yeagley, Martha, Jay, Glenn; brothers and sister: Daniel, Robert, Elmer, and Clarence Lehman, Elizabeth Brandt; 7 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jacob R. Ebersole (husband). Congregational membership: Elizabethtown Mennonite Church. Funeral: Nov. 26, Mennonite Home, by Richard H. Frank. Burial: Stauffers Mennonite Cemetery.

Frey, Abner, 59, Elmira, Ont. Born: Oct. 23, 1937, Peel Twp., Ont., to Menno and Lizzie Weber Frey. Died: Nov. 15, 1996, Elmira, Ont., of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Florence Metzger Frey; sons: Gerald, Marlin; brothers and sisters: Nelson, Mahlon, Cleason, Alice, Edna, and Lena Frey. Funeral and burial: Nov. 17, Floradale Mennonite Church, by Fred Redekop.

Gautsche, Herma Nofziger, 94, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Sept. 20, 1902, Archbold, Ohio, to Levi and Lizzie Riegsecker Nofziger. Died: Nov. 27, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivors—children: Doris Ebersole, Mary Diller, Dale, Delmar, Alice Schmucker, Richard, Glenda Hurst; 32 grandchildren, 62 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Oscar Gautsche (husband). Funeral: Nov. 30, Tedrow Mennonite Church, by Randy Nafziger and Charles Gautsche. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Gautsche, Inez Wyse, 87, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Dec. 25, 1908, Archbold, Ohio, to Edwin and Martha Roth Wyse. Died: Dec. 2, 1996, Archbold, Ohio. Survivors—children: Myrl, Lawrence Jr., Valetta Van Valkenburg, Carolyn Fricke, Geneva Miller, Joyce Taylor; brother: Leland Wyse; 18 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild. Predeceased by: Lawrence Gautsche (husband). Funeral: Dec. 5, Central Mennonite Church, by Charles Gautsche. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Kinsie, Archie, 72, Cambridge, Ont. Born: Aug. 4, 1924, Breslau, Ont., to Maurice and Pearl Weber Kinsie. Died: Nov. 17, 1996, Cambridge, Ont., of cancer. Survivors—wife: Nellie Burkholder Kinsie; son: Fred; brother and sister: Alex, Francis Weber; 2 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20, Breslau Mennonite Church, by Laurence Martin and Rufus Jutzi.

Kornhaus, Eva N. Steiner, 90, Orrville, Ohio. Born: April 21, 1906, Orrville, Ohio, to Peter R. and Anna V. Burkholder Steiner. Died: Nov. 27, 1996, Orrville, Ohio. Survivors—husband: David R. Kornhaus; children: Wayne, Norma Mast; 8 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Donna Hostetler (daughter). Funeral and burial: Nov. 30, Martins Mennonite Church, by Randy Murray.

Landis, Anna R., 90, Souderton, Pa. Born: Nov. 28, 1906, Line Lexington, Pa., to Enos and Annie Ruth Barndt. Died: Nov. 23, 1996, Souderton, Pa. Survivors—children: Mildred Moore,Gladys Alderfer, Richard B., Franklin B.; 15 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Paul R. Landis (husband) and Arlene Landis (daughter). Funeral: Nov. 26, Souderton Homes Chapel, by Lowell H. Delp. Burial: Line Lexington Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Lehman, Bessie, 93, West Liberty, Ohio. Born: Dec. 5, 1902, Versailles, Mo., to Joel and Martha Basinger Lehman. Died: Nov. 23, 1996, West Liberty, Ohio. Survivors—brothers and sister: Daniel, Wilfred, Kenneth, Pauline Miller. Funeral: Nov. 26, Bethel Mennonite Church, by Ben Eberly. Burial: Fairview Cemetery.

MCC workers attend orientation. *Akron, Pa. (MCC)*—Thirty workers participated in orientation at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters here on Nov. 5-15. Six of them are affiliated with the Mennonite Church. They are:

Front row (left to right): Kandace Helmuth, Kidron, Ohio, administrative assistant, MCC Africa department, Akron, Pa.; Deborah Stoltzfus, Harrisonburg, Va., horticulturalist, Bangladesh; Josephine Kauffman, Fairview, Mich., packer for Ten Thousand Villages, Akron.

Back row: Elizabeta Stajic, New Holland, Pa., administrative assistant, Akron; Dawn Weaver, Ephrata, Pa., records and library assistant, Akron; Oland Kauffman, Fairview, Mich., packer for Ten Thousand Villages, Akron.

Longenecker, Esther Mattie Habecker, 89, Lancaster, Pa. Born: April 8, 1907, Manor Twp., Pa., to John and Mattie Haverstick Habecker. Died: Nov. 9, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of cancer. Survivors—daughters: Kathryn Fry, Joanne Sauder; 5 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jonas Z. Longenecker (husband). Funeral and burial: Nov. 13, Habecker Mennonite Church, by Norman Shertzer and Randy Martin.

Martin, Delmar W., 49, Greencastle, Pa. Born: April 10, 1947, Hagerstown, Md., to Phares and Viola Martin. Died: Sept. 4, 1996, of a heart attack. Survivors—wife: Mary L. (Martin) Martin; children: Tamara L. Hade, Terry L.; sisters: Arleta and Rayetta Martin; one grandchild. Funeral and burial: Sept. 8, Salem Ridge Mennonite Church, by G. Joseph Martin, Enos Martin, and Merle Cordell.

Massanari, Orva F. Gerber, 76, Goshen, Ind. Born: May 2, 1920, Harper, Kan., to Edward and Bertha Plank Gerber. Died: Nov. 14, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Walter S. Massanari; children: Patricia Massanari Beyeler, Kathleen Massanari Mosley; brother: Loren Gerber; 2 stepchildren. Predeceased by: Thomas and Steven Massanari (sons). Memorial service: Nov. 17, College Mennonite Church, by Nancy Kauffmann. Burial: Clinton Brick Cemetery.

Miller, Esther Jean Bontrager, 68, Newton, N.C. Born: Sept. 29, 1928, Glen Flora, Wis., to Felty and Mary Miller Bontrager. Died: Nov. 14, 1996, Newton, N.C., of cancer. Survivors—husband: David Miller; children: David Allen, John Marvin, Kenneth James, Mary Esther, Margaret Ann; brothers and sisters: Bill, Ray, Harvey, Elmer, Ida Mae, Ella, and Elva Bontrager, Malinda Sommers, Eileen Dominguez; 8 grandchildren, one stepgrandchild, one stepgreat-grandchild. Funeral and burial: Nov. 17, Mountain View Mennonite Church, by Edward M. Godshall and Wellington Moyer.

Miller, Joe D., 85, Grantham, Pa. Born: Feb. 21, 1911, Hutchinson, Kan., to Daniel N. and Lizzie Fry Miller. Died: Nov. 16, 1996, of lung congestion. Survivors—wife: Trena Brown Miller; children: Edith, Gilbert, Sharon Herr; brothers and sisters: Alvin and Ray Miller, Mary Headings, Alice Beachy, Cora Miller, Nora Beachy; 7 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 19, Messiah Village Chapel, by Marion J. Heisey, J. Robert Lehman, and Earl E. Herr. Burial: Grantham Memorial Park.

Nissley, Ralph H., 81, Manor Twp., Pa. Born: 1915, Manor Twp., Pa., to Christian and Barbara Herr Nissly. Died: Nov. 10, 1996, Akron, Pa. Survivors—wife: Miriam Groff Nissly; children: Ralph G., Melvin G., Glenn G., Marian G. Harnley; sisters: Grace Horning, Barbara H. Nissly; 14 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13, Masonville Mennonite Church, by J. Wilmer Eby and Aaron H. Souders. Burial: Millersville Mennonite Cemetery.

Posar, James Jr., 64, Oklahoma City, Okla. Born: Aug. 27, 1932, Chicago, Ill., to James Sr. and Ida Yoder Posar. Died: Oct. 27, 1996, Oklahoma City, Okla. Survivors—wife: Ethel B. Loucks Posar; children: Robert, Veronica Worley; 4 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 29, Joy Mennonite Church, by Moses Mast and Ron Brown.

Schrock, Mary Rosanna Edwards, 76, Spencerville, Ind. Born: March 18, 1920, Akron, Ohio. Died: Nov. 13, 1996, Fort Wayne, Ind., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Albert Schrock; children: Jim, Dennis, Carol Mauck; brother: Martin Edwards; 5 grandchildren. Predeceased by: Jerry (son). Funeral: Nov. 16, North Leo Mennonite Church, by Doug Zehr. Burial: Shore Mennonite Cemetery.

Schwartzentruber, Katherine "Katie" Leis, 92, Elmira, Ont. Born: July 19, 1904, Wellesley Twp., Ont., to Solomon R. and Mary Lichti Leis. Died: Nov. 15, 1996, Elmira, Ont. Survivors—children: Dorothy Sauder, Mabel Snyder; sisters: Ada Krohn, Vanita Leis; 8 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Edwin Schwartzentruber (husband) and Harold (son). Funeral and burial: Nov. 17, Nith Valley Mennonite Church, by Sue C. Steiner.

Shank, Mary B. Strickler, 92, Harleysville, Pa. Born: Sept. 26, 1904, Lancaster County, Pa., to Reuben and Mary Buch Strickler. Died: Nov. 23, 1996, Sellersville, Pa. Survivors—daughter: Gladys S. Cavella; 2 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Norman Shank (husband). Congregational membership: Stauffer Mennonite Church. Funeral: Nov. 29, Rothermel Funeral Home, by Carl Snavely and Russell Baer. Burial: Millersville Mennonite Cemetery.

Smith, Norman O., 88, Elida, Ohio. Born: Aug. 5, 1930, Elida, Ohio, to Perry and Susanna Brenneman Smith. Died: Nov. 10, 1996, New Carlisle, Ind. Survivors—wife: Clara Berry Smith; children: Paul, Kenneth, Marjorie Harms, Glenna Kirkendall; sisters: Clara Damger, Ruth Kraus; 12 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 14, Salem Mennonite Church, by Melvin Hathaway.

He pastored the Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church.

Smucker, Ruth Adeline, 63, Harrisonburg, Va. Born: Oct. 28, 1933, Newport News, Va., to Daniel M. and Verna Mast Smucker. Died: Dec. 4, 1996, Harrisonburg, Va., of cancer. Survivors—brothers and sisters: Daniel M. Jr., Paul C., Mabel S. Yoder, Naomi, Elizabeth. Funeral: Dec. 7, Zion Mennonite Church, by Richard K. Early, Paul C. Smucker, and Robert W. Mast. Burial: Lindale Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Starnes, Albert Lee, 66, Vale, N.C. Born: Dec. 10, 1929, Hickory, N.C., to Claude Edward Bumgarner and Bertie Starnes Hefner. Died: Nov. 15, 1996, Hickory, N.C., of heart failure. Survivors—wife: Annie Mae Starnes; sons: Kenneth, Ronald; brothers and sisters: R.A., James Daniel, and Bobby Hefner, Shirley Holden, Charlotte Canipe; 3 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 18, Mountain View Mennonite Church, by Wellington Moyer and Edward M. Godshall.

Stutzman, Alice Esther King, 80, Garden City, Mo. Born: Sept. 4, 1916, Garden City, Mo., to Elmer and Sarah Blank King. Died: Oct. 17, 1996, Harrisonville, Mo. Survivors—children: Eldon, Janice Good, Konnie Yoder; 11 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ralph Stutzman (husband) and Landon (son). Funeral: Oct. 21, Sycamore Grove Mennonite Church, by Ken Steckly. Burial: Clearfork Cemetery.

Newspaper

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Tough questions for our future (2):

Who should pay to do church?

In last week's editorial, I noted the difficult task before the Mennonite Church General Board (MCGB) at its fall meeting—coming up with a balanced budget for 1997. It cut funding to other groups, it froze expenses, and it still had a $30,000 deficit in its new budget. MCGB hopes this will be covered by "faith revenue" and by "friends of the board."

Faith revenue is simply that: going by faith that God will provide as needs arise. But who are these "friends of the board"?

MCGB traditionally gets its revenue through contributions from its members, the district conferences. With funds declining, the board has, for the past several years, usually in January, sent fundraising letters to its "friends": current and former board members, "interested" persons in the church, even its own staff. Last year's letter raised close to $8,000—and the "friends of the board" letter is now a regular part of MCGB's budget.

Now there's nothing new here. Other Mennonite Church boards and agencies, long on program and short of funds, have developed their own "friends"—along with staff to keep track of them. Last time I heard anybody count, we now have 45-50 full-time fundraisers working for the Mennonite church.

Fundraising has, in short, become part of the Mennonite landscape, though not without some nervousness. That's because we wonder why we need to convince people to give to what they said they wanted the church to do in the first place. When this begins to be true for even the chief policy and discernment body of the church, the General Board, perhaps it's time to ask questions. Like these:

1. Does it matter who pays to keep the church going? Miriam Martin, MCGB's finance committee chair, summed it up well during the board's fall budget discussions. "How we raise our funds speaks to who we are," Martin said. "If we are an association of conferences, then the funds need to be raised by the conferences. If we are an institution, then we can go to individuals and elsewhere for our money."

The Mennonite Church began as an association of conferences who wanted to work together to do what none could do alone. Behind that move was the assumption that the members of the association would pay to keep it going.

Today, with support dwindling, the pressure is on to go outside that association for help. With that move comes questions about power, influence, and control. What happens when these other sources no longer like the way the church—or one of its institutions—is going?

2. Has what we want to do outstripped what we're able to do? Why is the association, the denomination, running out of funds? The answers are elusive, the theories many.

Some wonder if we have outbuilt ourselves. The Mennonite Church had almost no structure in the mid-1800s. Now it takes 313 pages to list the agencies and institutions in the 1996 *Mennonite Yearbook*. Persons in other denominations look at what we do for our size and shake their heads. Maybe it's time we shake our own.

Still others find an answer for dwindling revenue in what they perceive to be a growing gap between the church's institutions and the "people in the pew" who are to support them. "People vote with their dollars," they say.

3. How important is the denomination to us? Do we really need this association of conferences and congregations called Mennonite? Do we have something worth preserving? Would we be better off to stop everything now before the funds run out completely—as some predict will happen sometime in the next century?

The answers to these questions begin inside each of us. We cannot shunt them off to the General Board—or the Integration Committee, another group that struggles with bringing vision and reality together as it brainstorms about what a new Mennonite denomination might look like.

The question of the future and who pays for it is my question. How important is the Mennonite church to me? Important enough to pay for it? Even if it means cutting back on my own or my congregation's budget? For, in the final analysis, the responsibility of paying to keep the church going is mine.—*jlp*

December 31, 1996

To be in Christ is to participate in a whole new order of things, a new creation, a new community different from things oriented from a human point of view. That is why we hold such high hopes for the church.

Gospel Herald

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH

'Today salvation has come to this house'

The church is called to be a community of salvation which anticipates the renewal of all creation, a kind of pilot project of God's saving intention for all.

by John Driver

Early one morning, as I was returning to our home in Barcelona, the train pulled to a stop in the city of Gerona. I sat gazing idly out the window. Suddenly the message of a large, freshly painted graffito caught my eye: "No se puede fiar en Dios; Franco esta en el cielo" (God can't be trusted; Franco is in heaven).

Francisco Franco was a brutal military commander and bloody dictator who ruled Spain from 1939 to 1975. With the backing of wealthy landholders, the military establishment, and the Catholic Church, he took power in a deadly civil war and ruled with an iron fist for some 40 years. Shortly before his death, Francisco ordered the execution of several Basque nationalists accused of terrorist activity. They were killed using an old method: the "garrote," which means literally clubbing the victims to death.

Shortly before his death in 1975, Francisco received the sacraments of the church for his salvation. The author of the graffito found all this strangely ironic, and he vented his frustration with a Christianity somehow able to as-

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Alan Kauffman:
I do not want to go it alone 6

'Mennobytes' by Al Albrecht:
Watch your language 8

1996 in review 10-11

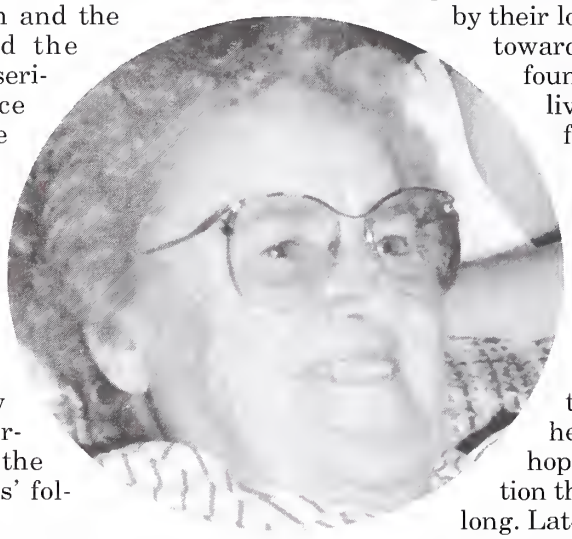
1996 index 14

MENNONITE CHURCH ELKHART LIBRARY

The salvation that the Bible describes does touch our innermost beings. It cannot be contained by history. But it also takes place today—in the here and now.

sure salvation in heaven for a violent and bloody dictator. For the graffiti writer, and I suspect for many others, that grace was just too cheap.

Francisco's story illustrates a dilemma that has faced the institutional church almost from the beginning. As Christianity became the established religion in the Roman empire—and the religion of the majority in the great nations of the West—there was pressure to institutionalize grace to place it within the reach of all (especially the rich and the powerful) who entered the church. This has led to a serious cheapening of grace and to distortions in the ways salvation has traditionally been understood. It has opened the way for the development of a number of theories for understanding the atonement that do not mesh with the vision held by Jesus, nor with the understanding articulated in the New Testament by Jesus' followers.



All too often the temptation has been to spiritualize our vision of salvation by understanding it as a reality which occurs essentially in the innermost part of our being. Or we project salvation into the future, as something to be experienced beyond the grave, or beyond history as we know it. Now there is an element of truth in both these views. Authentic salvation does touch and transform the innermost recesses of our being, and the salvation which the Bible describes is far too big to be contained by history. We fully expect it to spill right over into eternity.

But there's more. Jesus preached—and the early disciples believed—that salvation also takes place in the here and now. The God of the Bible is a saving God, and this salvation is personal, social, and even cosmic. It is supremely found in Jesus. In short, this salvation really saves—today, tomorrow, and for eternity.

Justin was born in a village in Samaria to pagan parents in about the year 100. This would probably have been only five or ten years after John wrote his Gospel and epistles. Being a Samaritan of pagan heritage, Justin grew up as a despised outcast in the eyes of his Jewish neighbors. To Jews who believed that their salvation was assured by their Abrahamic heritage and God's covenant with them, Justin represented a well-nigh hopeless case.

Young Justin was restless. Treated as scum of the earth by Jews, he tried the wide range of Greek philosophies and mysteries in his spiritual search. Then he met some Christians whose salvation was real. To them Justin was not a hopeless outsider but the object of their deepest affection. He was overwhelmed by their love and their openness toward him. He was dumbfounded by the quality of their lives and by their courage in facing persecution and even death at the hands of their detractors. They had in truth been freed from the demonic powers oppressing humanity.

So, at 30 years of age, Justin joined these Christians. He found a people, he found God, and he found hope. He discovered the salvation that had eluded him for so long. Later, in Ephesus, he became a teacher in this new Christian way of salvation. He had an opportunity to relate to the Jews, no longer as a pagan, but as a follower of the Messiah. His long conversation with one of their spokesmen, Trypho, is recorded in his writings.

For his part, Justin tried to persuade Trypho that the long-awaited Messiah had indeed come and that the followers of Jesus were, in effect, the true people of God among whom salvation was to be found. But Trypho responded, "No, when the Messiah comes the world will be dramatically changed." Trypho said the prophets had shared a vision of peace and salvation to be ushered in by the Messiah. If the Messiah were here, said Trypho, then vision of shalom would have become a reality. But this had not occurred. The world was still filled with hatred and warfare. Therefore, Jesus of Nazareth could not possibly have been the Messiah.

Justin agreed with much of Trypho's thesis. He and his fellow Christians also believed the prophetic texts and their vision of messianic salvation. So what could Justin say?

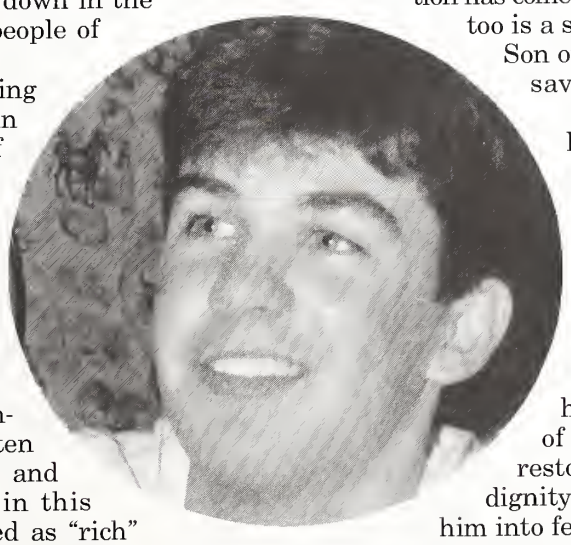
Let me point out first what Justin did not say. He did not say that we need not expect the

world to be changed, since salvation takes place invisibly, deep within individuals, and that Christ really came to bring peace deep within our hearts. He did not distinguish between temporal peace and eternal peace by claiming that true salvation will not occur until the end of time, that true messianic peace can be expected only during the millennium or in heaven. Unlike many Christians who held traditional views since that time, Justin resisted the temptation to internalize or futurize his vision of salvation to accommodate humans as they are.

What Justin did say, in effect, was this: "The Messiah has come, and the world has in fact been changed. It has been transformed in a messianic people who live according to the law of Christ. Violence has ceased among us in the church, and we Christians are busily unlearning our tendencies toward violence and warfare."

For Justin, the reality of salvation in the life of the church was the sure evidence that the world was being changed and that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. For him and the community which he represented, salvation was for real. Enemies were transformed into friends, brothers and sisters in God's family. Liars became transparent. Violent persons became peacemakers. The selfish became generous and compassionate. Walls between outsiders and insiders came down in the communion of this new people of God.

This is the understanding of salvation that we find in the Gospels. The story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 illustrates this well. In fact, this is one of only two texts in the Gospels where we find the word "salvation" used by Jesus.



Zacchaeus, like Justin, was an outcast. He was included in the category often referred to as "publicans and sinners." To be "chief" in this group and to be described as "rich" was in no sense a compliment, since everyone knew how these traitorous crooks lined their pockets. For added insult, everyone literally "looked down their noses" at Zacchaeus, since he was so short. His need to run ahead and climb a sycamore tree was more than a mere literary flourish. It climaxed the indignities to which this despised man was continually exposed. There he was, this social outcast and object of public derision, "treed" before a crowd of his adversaries, evoking visions of a frightened animal fleeing a pack of barking hounds.

Jesus was willing to take a public stand in favor of this hated outcast. Doing so brought down the wrath of the religious establishment on his head. This is an example of the way in Jesus was willing to give his life and reputation for the salvation of the lost.

Salvation in Zacchaeus' case included being freed from his avarice, his materialism, and his callous treatment of others. This salvation manifested itself in generosity toward his victims and reconciliation with them. In the process, Zacchaeus became a true child of Abraham by experiencing the salvation Jesus came to bring.

There is a special irony in all this, which was most certainly not lost on Jesus' detractors. The Jewish religious establishment had long prided itself in its claim to Abrahamic heritage. In John's Gospel, Jesus exposed the empty hypocrisy of their claim. "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did" (John 8:39).

At the conclusion of the Zacchaeus story, Jesus' words speak for themselves: "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:9-10). Just like Justin a century later, Zacchaeus was lost, without a people, without God, and without hope in the world. Then Jesus, with a compassion the likes of which Zacchaeus had never imagined in his wildest dreams, came into his life and his home—to break the bread of communion with him, to restore his lost sense of human dignity, to show that God invited him into fellowship as he was, unconditionally, before any initiative by Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was transformed by Jesus' unmerited love and openness. That is what Jesus called salvation, restored communion with others and with God.

As the early church moved out in their evan-

The reality of salvation is fulfilled in the church, where liars become transparent, violent persons become peacemakers, and the selfish become generous.

gelizing mission, they continued to share the saving works and words of Jesus that had touched their lives so deeply. Depending on their audience, they used a wide variety of figures and metaphors to communicate the experience and meaning of this salvation wrought by the Messiah.

One metaphor which communicated most powerfully with Gentile outsiders was reconciliation. "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them . . . we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God," Paul writes in 2 Cor. 5:19-20. Now this was more than a spiritual or purely figurative way of speaking. It was really this way—everyone being reconciled.

In his life and ministry, Jesus made room for Judaism's outcasts within the new family of God that he gathered around himself. The early disciple-group was a microcosm of this reality. In fact, it was this kind of revolutionary reconciling activity in favor of the outcasts that brought down the wrath of Jewish authorities on Jesus' head. It was this kind of saving activity that got Jesus crucified. This was the price Jesus paid for salvation.

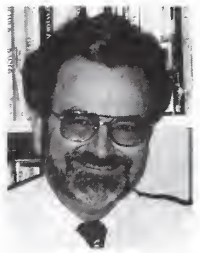
According to Paul, to be in Christ is to participate in a whole new order of things, in a new creation, in a new community essentially different from the way things were oriented from a human point of view. This is why we hold such high hopes for the church. We are called to be that community of salvation which anticipates the renewal of all creation, a kind of pilot project of God's saving intention which will finally enfold all of creation.

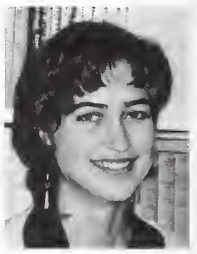
In article 6 of the new *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, this statement sums up the biblical vision of God's intention: "Human beings have been made for relationship with God, to live in peace with each other, and to take care of the rest of creation" (p. 28). This is the biblical understanding of salvation: the restoration of communion among humans, with God, and all creation.

Before retiring in 1989, John Driver, Goshen, Ind., spent 40 years in service and mission assignments in Latin America and Spain. He continues on the teaching staffs of the Hispanic Ministries Program at Goshen College and of the Seminario Anabautista Latino-Americano in Central America. This is adapted from a sermon he preached at his home congregation, East Goshen Mennonite, this past October.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.
—Luke 2:30-32, NRSV

Gospel Herald





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Figuring Out When Enough Is Enough (Nov. 19) was a welcome continuation of the topic I discussed several weeks earlier in ***My Business Is Your Business*** (Oct. 29). One of the messages the "Martins" send is that, with careful and sagacious planning, even small church salaries can accrue significantly, thanks to the compounding of returns under our economic system.

Another important message which can be wholeheartedly applauded is the stewardship commitment and modesty in lifestyles of the Martins. Nowadays, if Christians become prosperous, the first order of business typically is to show it by conspicuous expenditures and consumption.

More significantly, the authors deserve commendation for coming to the brink of sharing their personal finances openly. I say coming to the brink, for sharing financial activities and planning with children is only a partial beginning. Children are not necessarily the most objective regarding family matters, especially money. Note how many families in history have been ruined by money conflicts.

This suggests, further, the fact that, for parents, children are only a partial expression of congregational discernment and admonition. If this is true, then what I gather is the central point of the Martins' article—submitting one's life, even economics, to the congregation is not fully achieved.

I commend "Mary and John Martin" for continuing the dialogue about how the congregation should operate in our private lives. But we need to go considerably further. We need to come clean and share our financial affairs and lifestyles with our fellow church members in person. Then we must follow that up with mutual openness to counsel and discernment of all the families (including the children) in a congregation about our values and priorities.

Calvin Redekop
Harrisonburg, Va.

What place does J. Robert Charles' "Perspective," ***Will NATO Go East?*** (Dec. 10) have in *Gospel Herald*? Although the article offers a fair overview of the secular conventional wisdom on NATO's expansion, it at no point attempted to discuss how the lordship of Jesus ought to impact our connection to this issue. Did the author mean to imply that the teachings and example of the Son of God are irrelevant when it comes to matters of international politics?

NATO is the most potent military alliance the world has ever known. It is designed to achieve its goals through violence and the threat of using force. I'd expect an article on NATO in "the weekly magazine of the Mennonite Church" to at least *note* that our Lord called his followers to an unconditional active love for all people that, among other things, seemed to reject all violence and all threats of violence.

John Zimmerman
Rocky Ford, Colo.

Having receiving my graduate degree in political science, I was fascinated by the discussions of Marxism, liberation theology, and the future of NATO in your Dec. 10 issue.

I would add some additional information to ***Another Chance to Reaffirm Our Primary Allegiance.*** A professor of mine, a self-proclaimed Marxist, explained that this ideology actually seeks to stamp out religion of any kind. Thus, Marxism cannot be "the only possible economic system from the Christian point of view," as Paul Tillich would have us believe.

Marxists believe that any religion, not only Christianity, glosses over the pain of alienation and gives people a false sense of belonging in society. So a Marxist government seeks to destroy the impact of God's grace and generosity in our lives. In its place is a reliance on the state for our needs.

The liberation theology Valerie Weaver speaks of in her editorial ***Good News from the Fringes*** is a Marxist interpretation of the Gospels. However, based on what I've outlined above, that is a paradox. We must be careful not to paint a picture of Christ identifying with our political beliefs. It is foolish to think, as Weaver notes, that Jesus would support Marxists, Socialists, Democrats, or Republicans.

Further, in ***Will NATO Go East?***, J. Robert Charles neglects to mention that, while this organization has attained its primary goal of preventing Soviet encroachment, its new mission can be just as powerful. That mission is bringing countries that were previously separated into a closer sense of cooperation. This should be an idea that is eagerly accepted by Mennonites. Even though NATO—and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which grew out of the Cold War's death—are rooted in the military tradition, they are far enough removed to be acceptable outcomes, from a nonresistance point of view.

Since I rarely experience political dialogue in the Mennonite Church such as you had in your Dec. 10 issue, I find this refreshing. I hope to see more of this type of debate. If we believe Christ is Lord of our lives, we can rely on him and not place our faith in any political system.

Steven Hunsberger
Telford, Pa.

Two Churches Leave Indiana-Michigan (Dec. 10). This brief news note about the withdrawal of the congregations caught my attention. I was particularly amused that the name of one was changed from Bourbon Chapel to New Wine Church.

Has this church experienced a diminution of spirit with its action, or is its distillation of the truth now in ferment?

John A. Amstutz
Noblesville, Ind.

Pontius' Puddle

The Emmaus Road is for me:

I do not want to go it

Yes, my pace may be altered. The voices will not be unanimous. My resources will not be only for myself. But with another, and the Other, there is home, healing, hope.

I do not want to go it alone: to Africa, in pastoral ministry, through life. There are just too many unknowns, too many wrong turns available, too many obstacles along the way.

I do not want to go it alone. The risks are far too great: of losing my way, of being beat up, of giving up.

I do not want to go it alone. I need another, or two, or more, to join me on the journey: to hold my hand, to speak encouragement, to share the experience.

These thoughts are not my first impulses.

My first thoughts are full of hot air—rising quickly in my mind, making me light-headed, inflating the macho images of independence, daring, self-sufficiency.

"I *can* go it alone," I think, in a daze. "I don't need them. I can do it myself, thank you."

Such babble comes dangerously close to suggesting, "I am the I AM." It almost sounds like the gospel at first—good news—this going it alone, living life my way. Almost . . . until I look around at the ones who have traveled these roads before me, alone.

Solitary roads they are, following the serpent instead of the Spirit.

Long, distant roads, disappearing on the horizon, appear to form needles, bursting my hot-air, ego-inflated thoughts of going it alone.

• • •

I noticed the road traveled by the prodigal son.

He went it alone: tired of fickle family, abhorring authority, ignoring advice. He seized what he had coming to him, he demanded his rights, he lived as he liked.

alone

by Alan Kauffman

He went it alone: brazen, cocky, independent.
He did not need another, he thought.
On this lonely road, he lost his way, and his inheritance, and his friends. He now had what he wanted; he was truly alone.
The prodigal soon found slop for food, mud for a bed, pigs for friends. A Jewish boy in a messy jam. Funny how sloppy food, dirty beds, and piggish friends bring us to our senses—a longing to return home.

Going it alone leads to nowhere. A spiral staircase into the pit. Independence is only a word, never a reality.
The road of the prodigal brings me to my senses. And I do not want to go it alone.

• • •

I look, and notice a road to Jericho. A traveler going it alone.
He knows it is dangerous to travel this road alone. He seems to laugh at fear, this rugged frontier pioneer.
Nothing can hurt him, he thinks. Not sticks, or stones, or knuckle bones. He can fend for himself. Daring, confident, a *real* man.
He went it alone, from Jerusalem to Jericho—ignoring its history, the warnings, the spoken concerns.
An innocent-looking web of a road that snared him; he struggled, entangled, alone. The predator had its prey, taking money, dignity, nearly his life.
His eloquence became a groan. A mangled body on the bloodied berm. A roadkill to be avoided by good religious folk in shiny new sandals.
His friends became enemies, passersby.
His enemy became a friend, a neighbor—a Samaritan.

The Samaritan knew what it was like to go it alone. Forced aloneness, in his case: rejection, prejudice, never measuring up to Jewish standards.
He knew this lonely road and its fear, its struggle, its pain of going it alone. The Samaritan saw this proud, daring, confident, mangled mess of a man who had been determined to go it alone. He became his companion—to bring healing.
This nameless traveler had learned the hard way—that he could not go it alone.
And neither can I.

• • •

There is another road leading from Jerusalem—this one to Emmaus.
There are two travelers on this road. Where there are two together in his name, a third Traveler appears. It takes two to make three on this road.
On this joined journey, sadness is not secret, pain is not private, burdens are not borne alone. My business becomes your business. Your life constantly intersects with mine. Many members, one body. Sons and daughters, same family.
There is strength in numbers, and security, and wisdom. One can be overpowered, two can defend themselves, a cord of three strands is not easily broken.
When we go this road with another, a resurrection miracle accompanies us. Unexplainable things happen, and life suddenly makes sense.
When we go this road with another, the third Traveler appears. Groaning gives way to gladness, hovering vultures become soaring eagles, dry bones have life spoken into them.
The Emmaus Road is straight and narrow; needle-like, it stretches into the horizon, bursting my hot-air, ego-inflated thoughts of going it alone.

• • •

The other roads look tantalizing. Go it alone, they signal to us. You can do it, flash their neon lights. But don't be deceived. Yellow-brick roads beyond the visible horizon become pig sties and graveyards. The fragrance of freedom becomes the stench of death when we choose to go it alone in this life.
The Emmaus Road is for me. A life in community. Yes, my pace may be altered as I travel with others. The voices may not always be unanimous as when I am alone. My resources are no longer spent only on me.
But with another, and the Other, there is home, healing, and hope. I have looked around, surveying the roads of experience. As I journey ahead, I have decided.
I do not want to go it alone.

Alan Kauffman is pastor of Glade Mennonite Church in Accident, Md. He and his wife, Nancy, have two teenage sons, Nate and Matt.
This article is adapted from a sermon Kauffman preached the Sunday before he and four others from his congregation left this past August for an 18-day trip to visit Mennonite Central Committee workers in Swaziland.

Watch your language

by Al Albrecht

"I *would like* to invite you to our lunch after the program this morning. . . . I *want* to welcome all of you to our worship service this morning. . . . I *would like* to thank you for your financial support of this project."

Listen to the way we talk to each other, especially during our services on Sunday morning or during churchwide conventions. Our talk and our announcements are pervasive with *would like's* and *want's*.

But the church-talk is not the only offender. *Would like's* and *want's* also show up at the morning coffee klatches, at noon Rotary meetings, and at evening library committee meetings. We hear these on TV from politicians and preachers, talk show hosts, game show moderators, and sports commentators.

If you are a member of a group to whom such language is directed, how do you respond? Do you wonder if the speaker is sincere? Maybe the speaker is uncomfortable with the audience? Maybe she or he is just a stuffed shirt who doesn't want to get too friendly, close with the listeners.

After you hear an *I would like,* do you ever feel like saying under your breath, "Well, go ahead, who is keeping you from it?" Maybe you want to say, "It is one thing to like to and quite another to actually do it." You may feel that the invitation is tentative, that the speaker is not quite sure that he or she is happy to see you.

In a sense, *would like's* are similar to a speaker's downcast eyes that never make contact with the listeners', or a voice that sounds dull and hollow, or the slouched posture that says, "I don't care."

When a speaker says to me, "Welcome to our church," and "Thank you for your support," and "I invite you to our potluck lunch," I believe that person is sincere. I respond positively. No doubt about the intention here.

Jesus said to Matthew the tax collector, "Follow me"; to the multitude, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest"; and to his disciples, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." This directness is a quality of the original language, not only of the English translation.

An open, democratic society demands clear, forthright language. There should be no dodges or obliquities.

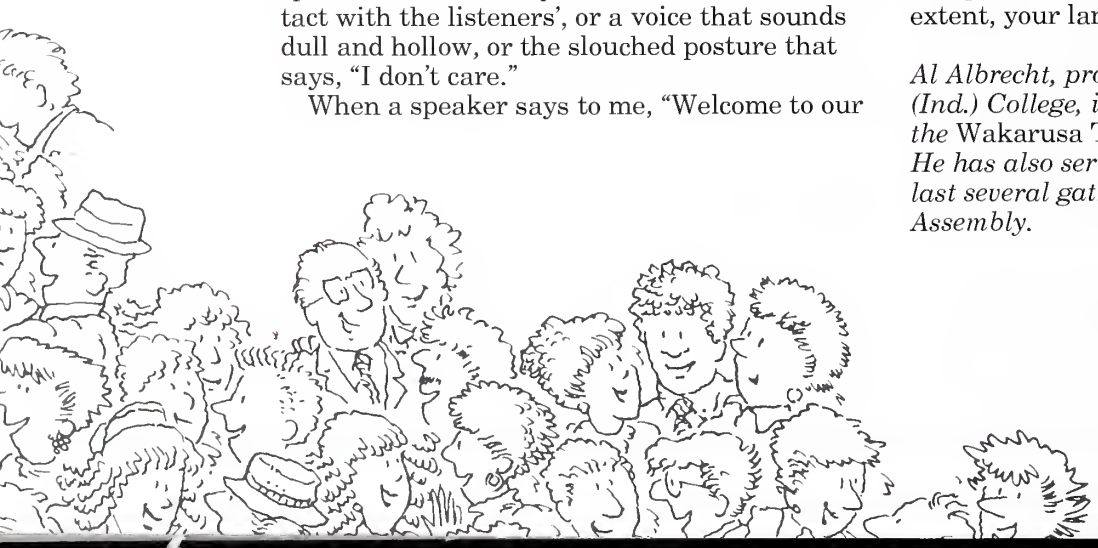
A first cousin to the lame *would like's* are these phrases: *I apologize* or *If I have offended anyone, please accept my apology.* An apology is a social procedure, used to rectify relationships after we know we have given offense. But to name the process is not to do it.

A sincere apology states the offense and describes the person's attitude or feelings about having given offense: "I am sorry that I distorted and misrepresented your position; I'll clarify it with those people that I misled. . . . I'm very sorry that this happened; I hope we continue to be friends."

To say only *I apologize* is similar to a limp handshake. It compares to a "Well, I don't care" response to a dinner invitation.

Watch your language. You may say something that you didn't intend. For to a great extent, your language is you.

Al Albrecht, professor emeritus at Goshen (Ind.) College, is a reporter and columnist for the Wakarusa Tribune *and a freelance writer. He has also served as parliamentarian at the last several gatherings of Mennonite General Assembly.*



Scholarships may boost number of college grads who do Voluntary Service

Elkhart, Ind. (MBM-MMA)—The pressure to repay student loans prevents some college students from doing Voluntary Service. Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) have found a potential solution to this dilemma for some students.

After much discussion, MBM Voluntary Service and the General Conference Mennonite Church's Mennonite VS helped MMA design a program for matching VS scholarships. These scholarships, which require a 50-50 match by the applicant's congregation, would help repay potentially as much as $9,000 in student loans for any volunteer who served three years in a recognized Anabaptist service program, including MBM's Voluntary Service or Service Adventure.

The new scholarship program should increase the number of participants in VS, according to Kent Dutchersmith, MBM recruitment associate. "Numbers in VS were the most high in times of war and when education was much cheaper," Dutchersmith says. "Since I'm not going to start a war, and with the scholarship we can work with loans, I believe it will make VS a more accessible and real option by breaking down a possible barrier."

The scholarship is available to volunteers:

- who are members or participants in congregations that are affiliated with an Anabaptist denomination or with historic roots in Anabaptism.
- whose congregations have an active MMA advocate who fills out the application on behalf of the volunteer.
- who volunteer with a program that is fraternally eligible to participate in MMA and meets the guidelines of the fraternal organization.
- who will use the money for school debts or tuition expenses incurred in pursuing a college or technical-school education.

MMA will give a maximum of $1,000 in the first year of service, $1,500 the second year, and $2,000 the third year. The total amount of the scholarship depends upon the ability of the participant's congregation to match the MMA award.

"The scholarship won't convince anyone not already interested in VS to go," says Dutchersmith. "But it may help those who don't know how to pay for student loans while in VS to make a decision."

—*Christy Risser*

K'ekchi' dedicate land for offices and study center

San Pedro Carcha, Guatemala (EMM-MCC)—The land is covered with cornstalks, trees, and weeds, but Sebastian Cuc and Jose Maria Tzub envision several buildings on this mountainous plot of earth between San Pedro Carcha and Chamelco. The K'ekchi' Mennonite Church leaders recently dedicated the land they purchased earlier this year.

This land will hold the offices of the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church and a new study center. Someday, they also hope to construct a small chapel and several cabins for retreat purposes at the top of the mountain. Mennonite Central Committee is helping to coordinate work teams to help with the construction of the buildings.

On a rainy day, Sebastian Cuc (left) and Jose Maria Tzub, leaders in the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church, stand among the cornstalks at the top of a mountainous area near San Pedro Carcha, Guatemala, and discuss with Eastern Mennonite Missions worker Linda Witmer the best location for the new K'ekchi' Mennonite Church offices and study center, to be constructed in 1997. Mennonite Central Committee is helping to organize work teams to help with the construction of the buildings.

About 200 people, mostly youth, carried 2,000 bagged trees to the high place where the dedication service was recently held and then scattered over the hillside to plant the seedlings. Pablo Tzul, president of the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church, explained that the previous land owner had deforested the terrain for lumber, with no thought of replanting. "It is our responsibility to care for the earth and to replant it," Tzul told the crowd.

The K'ekchi' Mennonite Church is finding an increasing need to educate and train its young people. In 25 years, the church has grown to about 80 churches divided into six districts, totaling 5,000 people.

There are few opportunities for the K'ekchi' people to receive a good education. Schools in the remote, mountainous area are often very poor, offering up to fourth grade only. The average level of education of K'ekchi' pastors is second grade.

Preparing leaders. The K'ekchi' leaders would like to begin a study center which will include primary and secondary education, trades, appropriate technology, and a Bible institute. They hope this project will prevent them from losing their young people to the cities, strengthen young people's faith, and prepare future leaders in the K'ekchi' Mennonite Church.

Ed Stamm Miller, assistant director of Latin America and the Caribbean for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), is coordinating the construction groups. The six- to eight-member teams will work alongside K'ekchi' volunteers to construct the buildings from mud blocks, a technology the K'ekchi' have recently learned.

Linda Witmer, nurse educator and Guatemala field leader for Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), and EMM co-worker Larry Lehman, will help coordinate the in-country team visits and building project. EMM workers have served among the K'ekchi' for more than 25 years.

Individuals interested in forming a work team can contact Ed Stamm Miller at 717 859-1151.—*Carol L. Wert*

(on our doorsteps)

♦ Hispanic Anabaptists hold their first North American gathering in Miami, Fla., in May. Delegates representing six groups approve creation of an association of Hispanic Anabaptists of North America.

♦ Teams from nine Mennonite and Brethren in Christ institutions meet in March and May to work on long-term antiracism strategies. Participants in the Damascus Road project, coordinated by MCC U.S., drafts a statement calling the church and its institutions to "aggressively work at dismantling racism."

♦ Virginia Conference affirms a statement against extending membership to persons serving in the military but remains "in full fellowship" with congregations that disagree. The General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (GC) general boards hold a two-day consultation on military and church membership in November.

♦ The Environmental Task Force of the GC and MC, meeting in September, make plans to talk with Mennonite institutions about their environmental policies and practices.

♦ Three area conferences deal with homosexuality in annual meetings. Recommendation to oust two churches who don't make homosexual practice a test of membership fails by three delegate votes at Illinois Conference meeting. Indiana-Michigan Conference delegates pass statement on sexuality and membership, and Southeast Conference moves toward separation with congregation which accepted into membership a gay couple living in a covenanted relationship.

Mennonites across the world commemorate the 500th birthday of Anabaptist church leader Menno Simons (1496-1561) in 1996. Here Gerald R. Brunk, professor of history at Eastern Mennonite University, portrays Simons as part of EMU's fall homecoming and parents' weekend. Brunk has done dramatic monologues of Menno Simons in period attire since 1986 in some 35 locations.

♦ Some 70 people from 30 parts of the world meet for a peacemaking seminar at Eastern Mennonite University in May. "Frontiers in Peacebuilding" includes participants from Rwanda, Northern Ireland, and South Africa.

♦ A new policy in the Canadian military allows members who have become conscientiously opposed to war to be released. Mennonites William Janzen, Christ Derksen Hiebert, and Doug Pritchard help to persuade the government to study the issue, which results in the new policy.

♦ The Giving Project, a five-year stewardship initiative, produces a brochure that outlines seven congregational initiatives and develops a statement of theology of money.

♦ Mennonite Central Committee Canada agrees to shift some responsibilities and funding from MCC Canada to the provincial MCC organizations.

♦ The Gideon Project, a yearlong study of Mennonite students, congregational leaders, and pastors finds that the

Mennonites respond in various ways to the wave of arson attacks on mostly African-American churches in 1996. Here Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteers from Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church help to rebuild Mount Zoar Baptist Church near Boligee, Ala., as a cameraman films their work. Mennonites send green ribbons as part of a "Ribbon of Hope" campaign to the Mount Zoar congregation. At least 17 Mennonite churches in Indiana and Michigan and numerous other congregations across the United States hold services outside in solidarity with those whose church buildings had been destroyed by arson.

A study by Mennonite Board of Missions in 1996 finds that 69 percent of new Mennonite Church congregations are started in urban areas. New churches composed of whites only account for 54 percent, and English is the language of worship in only 61 percent of the congregations in the report. Here the choir of Ethiopian Evangelical Church in Baltimore, Md., leads the congregation in prayer during a worship service. The church's pastor Kinfe Zewdie, who serves as a church planter with Eastern Mennonite Missions, preaches in Amharic.

Mennonite Church values higher education and its church colleges. Yet there is a significant drop in the number of Mennonite college students enrolled in the church's schools.

(integration)

♦ Conversations continue about integration of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and the Mennonite Church (MC) after a decision to merge was made at a joint assembly in Wichita, Kan., in July 1995. In an October 1996 meeting, the Integration Committee agrees on a model for a new denominational structure featuring four regional centers. The GC and MC general boards direct the Integration Committee to keep working on the idea of a decentralized structure. The MC General Board also tells the Integration Committee that bringing the two general boards together should be the first priority in the integration process.

(around the world)

♦ *Bosnia*: Mennonite Central Committee ships over 6,000 Christmas food boxes to refugees in the former Yugoslavia.

♦ *Dagestan:* Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), in partnership with Northridge Christian Fellowship in Springfield, Ohio, launches ministry in Dagestan, a republic of the former Soviet Union.

Refugees on the move and continued ethnic conflict in the Central African countries of Burundi, Rwanda, and Zaire make headlines again in 1996. Mennonite Central (MCC) responds with a call for funds and for 50,000 blankets to be donated by Christmas and to be sent to people in Bukavu, Zaire. Here MCC's material resource manager Kevin King and volunteers Karissa Sauder and Mickey Carey unpack some of those blankets. Although most Rwandan refugees around Goma, Zaire, have returned home, MCC reiterates the need for prayer and aid for Rwandans and Zairians further south around Bukavu. Terry Sawatsky, codirector of MCC's Africa programs, says the situation in eastern Zaire is "as serious as anything in the region since 1994, with the potential to be even worse."

♦ *Guatemala:* K'ekchi' Mennonite Church leaders visit the United States to tell how they raised one-third of the national church budget in five years.

♦ *Iraq:* The executive committee of Mennonite Central Committee faxes a letter imploring President Clinton to stop military action after the president dispatches 5,000 more troops to the Persian Gulf in September and the U.S. attacks Iraq with bombing raids. MCC sends 13,600 school kits to Iraq.

♦ *Israel:* Feasibility study begins of Nazareth Village, an interpretive center about life in Jesus' day. MBM worker D. Michael Hostetler directs the study, scheduled for completion in 1997.

♦ *Laos:* The United States agrees to make the clearing of bombies a top priority and to set up training schools focusing on bomb clearance and community safety. This occurs partly through the efforts of MCC.

♦ *Northern Ireland:* Peace efforts appear to crumble, says Joe Campbell, coordinator of MCC and MBM efforts in Ireland. David Moser, the first joint worker in Europe for MBM and the Commission on Overseas Ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church, begins term as pastor of a church on the dividing line of Belfast's Catholic and Protestant communities.

(beginnings and endings)

♦ *Leslie Francisco III* begins as president of the African-American Mennonite Association (AAMA) in January, replacing *Stan Maclin.*

♦ *Lara Hall* begins as executive secretary of the Women's Missionary and Service Commission (WMSC). She succeeds *Marian Hostetler,* who resigns effective Sept. 1.

♦ *William J. Hawk* begins as vice president and academic dean at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., on July 1.

♦ *Susan Mark Landis* is appointed minister of peace and justice for the Mennonite Church General Board.

♦ *James Schrag* becomes general secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church on Aug. 15. He follows *Vern Preheim,* who served as general secretary since 1980.

♦ *Shirley Hershey Showalter* is named 14th president of Goshen (Ind.) College. She assumes her responsibilities Jan. 1, 1997. *Victor Stoltzfus,* president since 1984, retires on June 30, and *Henry Weaver* serves as interim president for six months.

NEW MEMBERS

Bellwood, Milford, Neb.: Darold and Imagene Burkey and Mitch and Betty Nisly.

Frazer, Pa.: Mark Berkey-Gerard, Melissa Berkey-Gerard, Joy Bowman, Ken Burk, Marlene Burk, Blythe Gatewood, Barbara Griffin, Charles Griffin, Ellen Hummel, Stephanie Neill, Jaia Paterson, Julie Prey-Harbaugh, Lori Stringer, and Neville Stringer.

Franconia, Pa.: Paul Bergey Jr., Jason Croll, Daniel Frustino, Sally Frustino, Stephanie Landis, Mary Leatherman, Dannelle Sautter, ReBecca Souder, Matthew Shisler, Mike Tomasso, Kris Tomasso, John Weil, Irene Weil, Peter Zimmerli.

Hartville, Ohio: Jared Coblentz, David Abdul II, Beverly Abdul, Jonathan Abdul, Hannah Abdul, David Abdul, Joey Doll, Lori Doll, Tiffany Sommers, Melissa Brown, Erika Hostetler, Julie King, Howard Miller III, Stephanie Sinegar, Josh Wengerd, Jonathan Yoder, Jun Penaflor, Beth Penaflor, Melodie Sommers, Steve Sinsabaugh, and Cathi Sinsabaugh.

Hopewell, Kouts, Ind.: John and Mary Anderson.

Mt. Pleasant, Chesapeake, Va.: Wade and Karen Thomas, Ron and Jean Vogel, and Shannon Miller.

Peace, Dallas, Tex.: Dwight Wiebe and Margot Wiebe.

Springdale, Waynesboro, Va.: Merle Swarey and Esther Cullen.

Waynesboro, Va.: Justin Booth, Tracey Booth, and Hulda Heatwole.

BIRTHS

Alderfer, Denise Cassel and Mark, Telford, Pa., Jordan David (first child), Dec. 9.

Carr, Shelly Yoder and Scott, Friendsville, Md., Shawn Thomas, (second child), Oct. 2.

Delp, Debbie Lee and Jay, Pennsburg, Pa., Jeremy Lee (second child), Dec. 10.

Gingerich, Karla Coblentz and Bill, Accident, Md., Nicholas Jacob (second child), Nov. 30.

Gochnauer, Sherri Hostetler and Jeff, Smithville, Ohio, Noah Thomas (second child), Dec. 12.

Hartzler, Sharon Stutzman and Mike, Rittman, Ohio, Abram Daniel (second child), Nov. 21.

Haven, Wendy Steiner and Darrell, Apple Creek, Ohio, Makenna Skye (first child), Dec. 10.

Kilgore, Mary and Ken, LaGrange, Ind., Isaac Clinton (third child), Nov. 17.

LaBonte, Sue Jones and Allen, Harrisonburg, Va., Emily Sarah (fourth child), Dec. 4.

Leatherman, Phyllis Knechel and Gerald, Harleysville, Pa., Kiersta Sherese (seventh child), Dec. 1.

Litwiller, Heather and Matthew, Washington, Iowa, Victoria Marie (first child), Dec. 6.

Miller, Rachel Hartrick and Craig, Dalton, Ohio, Isaiah Andrew (first child), Dec. 7.

Nafziger, Gail Hess and Shawn, Goshen, Ind., Oliver Patrick (second child), Aug. 15.

Nissen, Bok Hye and Roger, Salem, Ore., Joseph Daniel (fifth child), Nov. 9.

Schnupp, Susan Stauffer and Jeffrey, Lancaster, Pa., Jesse Lynn (second child), Sept. 23.

Sellars, Jessica, Telford, Pa., Courtney Joy (first child), Dec. 6.

Showalter, Lois Kuhns and Lowell, Hagerstown, Md., Katie Rebecca (fourth child), Nov. 21.

Sollenberger, Andrea Melachrinos and Lynn, Gainesville, Fla., Laura Ann (fourth child), Dec. 2.

Stoltzfus, Ruby Yoder and Phil, Mount Joy, Pa., Derrick Andrew (first child), Nov. 16.

Stutzman, Ann Martin and Jim, Lancaster, Pa., Emma Martin (first child), Nov. 5.

MARRIAGES

Butsakone-Peachey: Khamko Butsakone, Vientiene, Laos, and Kristina Peachey, Goshen, Ind. (College), Nov. 18.

Core-Wideman: Berniece Core, Albany, Ore., and Walter Wideman, Albany, Ore. (Prince of Peace), Oct. 27, by Dave Stutzman.

Graber-Showalter: Galen Graber, Stuarts Draft, Va. (Lynside), and Jenny Showalter, Staunton, Va. (Harrisonburg), Dec. 7, by Steve Yoder.

Hess-Shreckengast: Dawn Hess, Smoketown, Pa. (Bart), and Troy Shreckengast, Lancaster, Pa. (Wesleyan), Nov. 16, by Leroy Umble (grandfather of the bride), and Marlin Nafziger.

Bender-Dworkin: Courtney Bender, New York, N.Y. (Neffsville), and Jonathan Dworkin, New York, N.Y., Dec. 14.

DEATHS

Eby, Martha W. Leaman, 87, Lititz, Pa. Born: Sept. 14, 1909, Upper Leacock Twp., Pa., to Benjamin and Mary Wenger Leaman. Died: Dec. 5, 1996, Lititz, Pa., of congestive heart failure. Survivors—husband: Lloyd M. Eby; children: Mary Ellen Leaman, J. Wilmer, John E., L. Marlin; brother and sisters: Daniel W. Leaman, Anna Miller, Mary Graybill; 14 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 8, Stumptown Mennonite Church, by Don Sensenig, Luke Nolt, John Leaman, Don Good, and Paul Zehr.

Esch, Henry D., 93, Glendale, Ariz. Born: Aug. 20, 1903, Centralia, Mo., to Daniel C. and Elizabeth Guengerich Esch. Died: Dec. 7, 1996, Glendale, Ariz. Survivors—wife: Barbara Maust Esch; children: Lelia Schlabach, Victor, Beulah Raber, Myrna Schmidt; brothers: Jacob, Lewis; 8 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12, Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, by Dennis Stauffer and Ray Keim. Burial: Rest Haven Cemetery.

Kiser, Oren S., 85, Fishersville, Va. Born: June 24, 1911, LaJunta, Colo., to Jacob and Sally Shank Kiser. Died: Oct. 5, 1996, Fishersville, Va., of heart failure. Survivors—children: Melba Kiser Heatwole, Norman, O. Sanford, Ellen Kiser Wyant, Charlotte Kiser Rhodes, Alta Sue Kiser Gomez, Richard; brother and sisters: Alvin, Ruby Swope, Della Benner, Grace Eshleman; 24 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Thelma Campbell Kiser (wife). Funeral and burial: Oct. 8, Springdale Mennonite Church, by Mark Wenger, Willard Heatwole, and Richard Showalter.

Martin, Clyde H., 85, Maugansville, Md. Born: Sept. 18, 1911, Hagerstown, Md., to Abram and Susan B. Horst Martin. Died: Nov. 30, 1996, Chambersburg, Pa. Survivors—children: Dorcas Good, Robert L., Victor R., Samuel C.; brothers and sister: John H., Lloyd H., Edna Kuhns; 7 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Fanny R. Horst Martin (wife). Funeral and burial: Dec. 4, Cedar Grove Mennonite Church, by Nelson L. Martin, Robert Cahill, and Mahlon Eshleman.

Mumaw, Mildred Irene Schrock, 83, Smithville, Ohio. Born: 1913, Rittman, Ohio, to David and Leah Meyer Schrock. Died: Dec. 6, 1996, Smithville, Ohio. Survivors—husband: Ralph Wayne Mumaw; children: Janet Klopfenstein, Mary Jane Fast, Wayne, Charles, Steve; sister: Ruth Steiner; 15 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 10, Smithville Mennonite Church, by Glenn Steiner and Randy Murray.

Roth, Truman N., 85, Archbold, Ohio. Born: Dec. 9, 1910, Archbold, Ohio, to Enos and Fannie Sauder Roth. Died: Oct. 12, 1996, Archbold, Ohio, of a heart attack. Survivors—children: Roger, Mabel Ann Klinger, Marlene Graf, James; brother and sisters: Clarence, Lucile Beck, Florence Roth; 14 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Luetta Gautsche Roth (wife). Funeral: Oct. 14, Zion Mennonite Church, by Ron Guengerich and Dee Swartz. Burial: Pettisville Cemetery.

Schweitzer, LaVerta Eicher, 82, Beaver Crossing, Neb. Born: Nov. 11, 1914, Beaver Crossing, Neb., to William and Lydia Steckly Eicher. Died: Dec. 9, 1996, Phoenix, Ariz. Survivors—husband: Dan Schweitzer; children: Leonard, Darrel, Anabel Andrews; brothers and sisters: Walter, Floyd, and Lloyd Eicher, Verdella Miller, Teresa Burkey, Violet Troyer; 5 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 13, Bellwood Mennonite Church, by Marlin Kym. Burial: West Fairview Cemetery.

Stutzman, Gordon Calvin, 82, Albany, Ore. Born: March 17, 1914, Woodriver, Neb., to Ora and Lydia Boshart Stutzman. Died: Oct. 3, 1996, Albany, Ore. Survivors—wife: Gladys Roth Stutzman; daughter: Yvonne Kropf; brothers and sisters: Harry, Percy, and Amos Gerig, Dorothy Detweiler, Clara Krabill, Mary Krabill, Wilma Sanderson; one grandchild, 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 7, Lebanon Mennonite Church, by Brent Kauffman, Gordon Miller, and Louis Lehman. Burial: Fairview Mennonite Cemetery.

Swartzentruber, Ethel Colegrove, 89. Born: April 9, 1907, Morenci, Mich., to Philip and Allie Mae Root Colegrove. Died: Nov. 15, 1996. Survivors—children: Hal, Arlene Evers, Shirley Tuttle, Kay Robb; brother and sister:

Leslie Colegrove, Marie McCoskey; 22 grandchildren, 36 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: C. S. Swartzentruber (husband) and one son. Congregational membership: Salem Mennonite Church. Funeral: Nov. 18, by Cliff Brubaker and Earl Stuckey. Burial: Oak Grove Cemetery.

Troyer, Elsie M. Eicher, 93, Milford, Neb. Born: April 16, 1903, Milford, Neb., to Martin and Kathyrn Roth Eicher. Died: Oct. 9, 1996, Milford, Neb. Survivors—children: Grace Roth, Lela Benson, Royden, Stanley, Lauren, Cloy, Kenneth; 43 grandchildren, 119 great-grandchildren, 12 great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: John R. Troyer (husband) and Milton (son). Congregational membership: Beth-El Mennonite Church. Funeral: Oct. 12, Bellwood Mennonite Church, by John C. King. Burial: West Fairview Cemetery.

Troyer, Ora, 92, Fairview, Mich. Born: May 11, 1904, LaGrange County, Ind., to Emmanuel and Sarah Miller Troyer. Died: Nov. 21, 1996, West Branch, Mich. Survivors—wife: Freda Kauffman Troyer; children: Marilyn Leland, Marlin, Roger, Richard, Diane Martin; 14 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 25, Fairview Mennonite Church, by Virgil Hershberger and Randy Detweiler. Burial: Fairview Cemetery.

Umble, Roy H., 83, Goshen, Ind. Born: May 11, 1913, to John S. and Alice Landis Umble. Died: Nov. 16, 1996. Survivors—wife: Ethel K. Kambs Umble; daughters: Janet Reedy, Alice Klassen; stepchildren: Judith Flora, William R. Kambs, Kathy-Fackelman; 4 grandchildren, 8 stepgrandchildren, 2 step-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Ferne Smith Umble (first wife). Memorial service: Nov. 20, College Mennonite Church, by Nancy Kauffmann. Burial: Violett Cemetery.

Wagner, Wilma Doris Parks, 73, Toledo, Ore. Born: Dec. 6, 1922, to Solon W. and Doris Small Parks. Died: Nov. 4, 1996, Toledo, Ore. Survivors—husband: Dan Wagner; children: Lorna Steele, Myrna Sieler, Carol Wallace, Sharon Norick, Donna Herndobler, Deanna Gage, Janet Brown, Sheena Wagner, Earl, Michael, Jerry; brother and sisters: Jim Parks, Betty Wise, Jeannie Kaps, Judy Parks; 27 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren. Congregational membership: Logsden Mennonite Church. Funeral: Nov. 8, Bateman Funeral Chapels, by Roy D. Roth. Burial: Eureka Cemetery.

Weaver, Blanche Smith, 96, Pittsfield, Pa. Born: Sept. 11, 1907, Garden City, Mo., to Jacob P. and Ida Schrock Smith. Died: Jan. 1, 1996, Pittsfield, Pa. Survivors—children: Donald, Robert, Janet, Joseph Jr. Predeceased by: Joseph N. Weaver (husband). Funeral: Jan. 5, Beaverdam Mennonite Church. Burial: Lawn Cemetery.

Weaver, Harry H. Jr., 91. Born: Aug. 29, 1905, Lancaster County, Pa., to Harry M. Sr., and Susan Hershey Weaver. Died: Sept. 14, 1996, Lancaster, Pa., of pneumonia and congestive heart failure. Survivors—children: Glenn H., Lois Friesen, Robert L.; 6 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by: Lottie Zimmerman Weaver (wife) and Clair R. (son). Funeral: Sept. 19, Hinkletown Mennonite Church, by Glenn Sauder, Warren Good, Donald Good, and Bill Detweiler. Burial: Weaverland Mennonite Church Cemetery.

White, Verda Burkey, 79, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Sept. 2, 1917, Milford, Neb., to Arthur and Amanda Stutzman Burkey. Died: October 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivors—husband: Clayton White; children: Gloria Drager, Donna Jones, Karalee Martin; brothers and sisters: Perry and Marlin Burkey, Alda Swartzendruber, Loretta Wolfer, Leann Miller; 5 grandchildren. Funeral and-burial: Oct. 15, 1996, West Union Mennonite Church, by Merv Birky and Dean Swartzendruber.

Wilcox, Katherine "Kate" Stauffer, 78, Nottawa, Mich. Born: Jan. 22, 1918, Ossineke, Mich., to Christian and Emily Schwartz Stauffer. Died: Nov. 18, 1996, Nottawa, Mich., of cancer. Survivors—husband: Clyde "Bud" Wilcox; children: Loretta Eicher, Judy Doney, James A., Edward A.; brothers and sisters: Menno, Freeman, Donald, and Virginia Stauffer, Mary Schwartz; 18 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Nov. 21, Locust Grove Mennonite Church, by William Wickey.

Yoder, Dorothy Lorene, 76, Kalona, Iowa. Born: Sept. 11, 1920, Kalona, Iowa, to Joe M. and Ella Miller Yoder. Died: Dec. 3, 1996, Kalona, Iowa. Survivor—sister: Melva Garber. Funeral and burial: Dec 6, East Union Mennonite Church, by Noah Helmuth, David L. Yoder, and Jay Miller.

Yoder, Elmer E., 55, Perkasie, Pa. Born: Nov. 23, 1941, Hutchinson, Kan., to Edward P. and Gertrude Stutzman Yoder. Died: Dec. 7, 1996, Philadelphia, Pa., of respiratory failure. Survivors—wife: Ruth Hockman Yoder; children: Michelle E. Horning, Chad D.; mother; sisters: Esther Kauffman, Ida Mae Miller; 2 grandchildren. Funeral and burial: Dec. 11, Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, by Truman H. Brunk Jr. and David A. Stevens.

Yoder, Olive Grace (Yoder), 83, Goshen, Ind. Born: Aug. 17, 1913, West Liberty, Ohio, to Earl M. and Barbara Ellen Algyer Yoder. Died: Nov. 25, 1996, Goshen, Ind. Survivors—husband: Dwight Yoder; children: Judith Denlinger, Barbara Stahly, John E.; brother and sister: Stanley E. Yoder, Ruth Ellen Yoder; 6 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 29, College Mennonite Church, by J. Lester Graybill. Burial: West Liberty Cemetery.

Zeager, Mildred E., 72, Elizabethtown, Pa. Born: April 3, 1924, Lancaster County, Pa., to Walter L. and Nora W. Ebersole Zeager. Died: Dec. 6, 1996, Elizabethtown, Pa. Survivor—foster sister: Ruth E. Nolt. Funeral: Dec. 10, Mount Joy Mennonite Church, by Joe Sherer and Libby Nissley. Burial: Good Mennonite Cemetery.

Zehr, Mary E., 73, Ludlow, Ill. Born: Aug. 10, 1923, Chenoa, Ill., to George and Ella Stalter Roszhart. Died: Sept. 7, 1996, Champaign, Ill. Survivors—husband: Melvin Zehr; children: Paul, Tom, Philip, Rebecca Moyer; sister: Evelyn May; stepmother: Ethel Roszhart; 7 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11, East Bend Mennonite Church, by Calvin Kaufman and Michael Dean. Burial: East Bend Memorial Garden.

Correction: Edna M. Myers' (*Gospel Herald,* Nov. 5) correct name is Sarah M. Myers.

1997 New Year's resolution

Don't forget students at Mennonite schools. Send:

- Care prayers
- Care packages
- Care pledges for congregational student aid programs

Investing in the youth of today is investing in the church of tomorrow. Blest be the tie that binds.

the difference

value *Mennonite education*

Key:
first number = month
second number = issue date
third number = page

AUTHORS

Ahlgrim, Ryan
Confronting sin in the congregation, 2:20,1
'Just because you have doubts does not mean you are excluded,' 4:9,7
17 principles to help us interpret the Bible, 3:19,1

Ahlgrim, Ryan and Randall J. Roth
Top 10 Mennonite bumper stickers, 7:23,5
Top 10 questions that may face the Mennonite church in the year 2050, 2:27,9
Top 10 rejected names for the integrated GC-MC church, 10:8,7

Albrecht, Al
Watch your language *(Mennobytes)*, 12:31,8

Augsburger, Larry
God gave one powerful shout at Easter, 4:9,1
Jesus slipped into Jerusalem by having a parade! 3:26,6
Learning about God from imperfect models, 7:9,6
Shall we celebrate the sun or the Son? 12:24,1

Augsburger, Myron
My vision for the Mennonite church #4, 9:17,2

Baker, Robert J.
God met me in Wichita—but not inside the temple (5), 4:16,6

Bauman, Harold
Getting past the extremes to see what the Spirit is doing in new movements, 8:20,10

Beachy, Jonathan
Learning to know the face of Mennonite mammon *(Mennobytes)*, 10:29,5

Becker, Ann Weber
My vision for the Mennonite church #2, 9:3,1

Birkey, Martin
Learning to know and practice the passions of God's heart, 9:3,6

Bishop, Jim
From introspection to life with new meaning, 2:20,7

Blosser, Don
Conflict can be God's call for spiritual growth, 5:14,1

Boers, Arthur Paul
Why do we call this Friday 'good'? 4:2,1

Bowman, Ray and Eddy Hall
Freeing your church from the beg, borrow, and steal syndrome, 10:29,6
Three things church buildings can never do, 3:5,6

Brenneman, James E.
From flaccid whiners to authentic witnesses, 10:22,1

Brubaker-Zehr, Scott
Is overseas mission a thing of the past? 1:9,6

Burkholder, J. Lawrence
My vision for the Mennonite church #6, 10:1,7

Bustos, Shirley
Right words *(poem)*, 7:30,4

Buxman, Bob
If there just weren't hens and frogs, 12:24,8

Byler, Dennis
'Your time is not yet over; your task is not complete,' 6:25,1

Byler, J. Daryl
Sounds of silence—a Type A struggles to be still (3), 3:26,1

Chandler, Michael
Joseph can teach us a great deal more than carpentry, 12:17,6

Charles, J. Robert
At the beach and on the boundary waters *(Perspective)*, 9:17,10
Some second thoughts about nationalism *(Perspective)*, 6:11,8
Will all the king's horses and all the king's men be able to put Bosnia back together again? *(Perspective)*, 3:12,10
Will NATO go east? *(Perspective)*, 12:10,8

Cressman, Arnold
My vision for the Mennonite church #7, 10:8,1

Derksen, Bill and Betty Hochstetler
Carpets were red, carpets are blue, 1:9,5

Detweiler, Phil Lindell
What we can learn about victory from a Beninese village, 7:23,6

Drescher, John
My vision for the Mennonite church #8, 10:15,6

Drescher-Lehman, Sandra
More real than my own body (11), 7:9,1

Driver, John
'Today salvation has come to this house,' 12:31,1

Duerksen, Norma Peters
My vision for the Mennonite church #6, 10:1,7

Dunn, Larry A.
Deciding when to stand between and when to stand alongside, 1:2,7

Finger, Thomas
Place to begin Mennonite theology, 7:30,1

Frey, Nancy
It's okay if you want to call me a 'missionary,' 1:9,1

Friesen, Don
Letters to the editor of 'The Heavenly Financial Times,' 3:12,8

Friesen, Dorothy Nickel
'Did we get it right, Dorothy?' 11:26,1

Gerber, Hansulrich
How should we pray for Bosnia? 2:6,12

Gibble, Kenneth L.
When the door is closed, 5:7,6

Gingerich, James
My vision for the Mennonite church #4, 9:17,3

Good, Steve J.
Mennonite M & M's, 7:16,8

Graham, Ann and Tom Price
Being comforted by those who suffered before us, 12:17,1

Green, Stanley W.
'You have given us goods. Now give us friends.' 11:12,4

Grimsrud, Ted
Making the penultimate too important often leads to violence, 4:23,1

Hall, Eddy and Ray Bowman
Freeing your church from the beg, borrow, and steal syndrome, 10:29,6
Three things church buildings can never do, 3:5,6

Hanks, Gardner
Combining our meditation with our action, 3:19,8

Helmuth, Ron
What's the real issue with TV and computers? 10:15,1

Hochstetler, Betty and Bill Derksen
Carpets were red, carpets are blue, 1:9,5

Hochstetler, Doug
Replacing 'Did you win?' with 'How did you play?' 11:5,4

Hollinger, Dennis
What does spirituality have to do with healing? 6:4,1

Jacobs, Donald R.
'You did not choose me; I chose you' (2), 2:27,8

Jantzi, Beryl
God's moments are rarely just individual events (9), 6:11,6

Kauffman, Alan
I do not want to go it alone, 12:31,6
My congregation helped me decide God was talking to me, 1:23,6
We are free to do whatever we want! 7:16,1
What Carol Smith taught me about the holy kiss, 6:4,6

Kennel, Marilyn
Quit being so nice! 10:15,5

King, Evangeline
Learning to respond to all kinds of disasters, 11:26,6

King, Ronda Suderman
Lent is a time to face our dying, 2:20,8

Klassen, Ron and John Koessler
What's so special about the small church? 6:18,6

Kniss, Philip L.
Easter Sunday ought to push us into action, 4:2,8

Kolb-Wyckoff, Martha
'Do you want to be well?' 7:2,6
Pruning is not punishment *(guest editorial)*, 6:11,16

Koontz, Ted
Being born again is possible, even for a stodgy, middle-aged seminary professor (1), 2:13,1
Gift of administration must not be taken for granted, 4:23,6

Kraus, C. Norman
Peace: a Mennonite restriction or a gospel fundamental? 10:22,6

Kriss, Steve
Calling men to life as God's sons, 2:6,9
Here, among Mennonites, I have seen God (13), 8:6,1

Kropf, Marlene
How can we keep from singing? 1:16,1

Kuniholm, Jason
Letting the whole field grow with patience *(Mennobytes)*, 11:26,8

Kurtz, Shirley
Isn't a pulpit just a place to spread one's papers? 10:8,6

Lederach, Paul M.
My vision for the Mennonite church #7, 10:8,3

Lesher, Ruth Detweiler
When to build fences and when to open the gates, 5:28,1

Litwiller, Julie
Because Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes, 12:24,5

Longacre, Kyle D.
Going home is the most difficult cross-cultural experience, 1:30,8
Longhurst, John
Why churches do or do not use the word 'Mennonite,' 8:20,1

Martin, Mary and John
Figuring out when enough is enough, 11:19,1
Mast, Donna
Learning better ways to walk through grief with friends, 4:30,6
Maust, Christine
What patriotism means to me *(poem)*, 7:2,3
Maust, Elaine
She said 'yes'! She said 'yes'! (12), 7:23,1
McCrae, Betsy Headrick
'At least I do what I say I'm going to do,' 12:17,8
Miller, Harold N.
'Following the peace'—one person's journey toward intimacy with God, 5:28,6
We can be both a people of the Book and a community of the spirit, 3:19,6
Miller, Keith Graber
Paying attention to the Word in the routine, 2:27,1
Prayer is often a matter of just showing up, 10:1,1
Wanderer, come home; but first, wander, 1:30,1
Miller, Levi
Another chance to reaffirm our primary allegiance, 12:10,6
Miller, Roman
Facing tough questions about the beginning of life, 2:13,8
Moyer, Ann Bender
My vision for the Mennonite church #3, 9:10,6
Murray, John C.
From what the Bible says to whom the Scripture reveals, 12:10,1
Living out the reality: love is the greatest, 9:10,1

Nation, Mark Thiessen
Are Christians patriots? Should we be? 7:2,1
Are we losing our moorings while gambling with our souls? 7:30,6

Peachey, Linda Gehman
Why we believe in peace and justice—for now, on earth, 9:24,1
Peachey, J. Lorne
Editorials
All of us, if we work at it, 3:19,16
Better light than fire! 7:9,16
('Dear God, I make too much'), 1:23,16
God doesn't carry a Daytimer, 11:19,16
God help us. What do we do now? 1:16,16
God helped us. This is what we did. 1:16,16
'Happy Birthday' at 100 by 400, 2:20,16
'Here we are, Lord,' 9:3,16
How to be a missionary, 1:9,16
In praise of 90-year-old women: What keeps leaders going, 8:27,16
In praise of middle-aged farmers: What keeps the church going, 9:10,16
In praise of the church's critics: What keeps the vision sharp, 9:24,16
It doesn't have to be a long hot summer, 3:12,20
'Let me tell you what God did for me,' 2:27,16
Living with ambiguity (1): Life, it seems, is mostly grays, 5:21,16
Living with ambiguity (2): Are there then no boundaries? 5:28,16
Living with ambiguity (3): O freedom! 6:4,16
Me, myself, and I, 5:14,16
Mennobytes, 10:29,16
Mennonite college and its constituency, 1:30,16
Nobody's telling me what to do! 4:16,16
On a hill—far away, 4:2,16
One small candle, 4:30,16
Peace, peace, when there may be no peace, 4:23,16
'See, I am making all things new,' 4:9,16
So who wants to be a martyr? 10:22,16
Solitaire, 10:15,16
Testing, with others, over time, 3:19,16
Through North Dakota. On Amtrak. 7:23,16
Tough questions for our future (1): What do I tell them in India? 12:17,16
Tough questions for our future (2): Who should pay to do church? 12:24,16
Tough questions for our future (3): Why is everything going 'local'? 12:31,20
What I wonder about on Stewardship Sunday, 10:29,16
What MRS can teach us about PK, 2:6,20
What will get us to the shore? 11:12,16
What's going on with integration? 11:26,16
What's in a border? (1), 6:25,16
What's in a border? (2), 7:2,16
When the church won't buy your computer, 8:6,16
When we win the lottery, 7:30,16
Who invited this guy named Robert? 2:13,20
Who then can understand? 3:19,16
Who ya gonna vote for? 11:5,16
Who's to go: liberals or conservatives? 10:1,16
Why I am a Mennonite, 6:18,16
Poettcker, Henry
My vision for the Mennonite church #3, 9:10,8
Price, Tim and Ann Graham
Being comforted by those who suffered before us, 12:17,1

Ratzlaff, Steve
My vision for the Mennonite church #3, 9:10,6
Redekop, Calvin
My business is your business, 10:29,1
Reimer, Margaret Loewen
Is four-part singing really Mennonite? 1:16,6
Who are the Mennonites in Europe today? 9:17,6
Rempel, Vernon
My vision for the Mennonite church #1, 8:27,1
Rich, Jonathan
Finding out why I decided to attend a Mennonite college, 1:30,6
Robbins, Ed
On three Monday nights in autumn (6), 4:30,1
Roth, John D.
Revival fires and an Anabaptist pilgrimage (3), 3:12,1
Roth, Randall J. and Ryan Ahlgrim
Top 10 Mennonite bumper stickers, 7:23,5
Top 10 questions that may face the Mennonite church in the year 2050, 2:27,9
Top 10 rejected names for the integrated GC-MC church, 10:8,7
Ruth, John L.
How I keep from becoming cynical, 6:18,8
Ruth-Heffelbower, Clare Ann
My vision for the Mennonite church #5, 9:24,7

Santiago, Noel
My vision for the Mennonite church #5, 9:24,6
Sauder, Michael and Nancy Sauder
Coming to terms with computer 'stuff,' 6:11,1
Sawatsky, Walter
Following Menno—as he followed Christ, 11:5,1
Schlabach, Theron
My religio-socio-political creed on social responsibility, 7:16,6
Schrock-Hurst, Carmen
Some things God alone can see (7), 5:14,6
Schwartzentruber, Hubert
My vision for the Mennonite church #7, 10:8,2
Sensenig, Kenneth L.
Surely the God who knew the heart of Naaman knows the heart of Yassir, 3:5,1
Shenk, Wilbert R.
What mission has done to the Mennonite Church, 11:12,6
Shisler, Barbara Esch
Gathering around the 'disabled God,' 11:26,2
Hebrews 12 *(poem)*, 6:25,8
Showalter, Ann
My vision for the Mennonite church #2, 9:3,3
Showalter, Shirley Hershey
God was there with her when no one else could be, 8:27,6
Showalter, Stuart W.
Cyberspace is also God's space, 1:2,1
Shue, Terry
My vision for the Mennonite church #5, 9:24,6
Shupack, Martin
Some principles for an Anabaptist witness to governing authorities, 8:6,5
Sider, Arbutus and Ron
A movement of hope—and a wellspring of debate, 2:6,8
What is this men's movement all about? 2:6,1
Slabaugh, Moses
Groans of an Omega, 11:5,7
Speigle, Wayne
My vision for the Mennonite church #6, 10:1,6
Steiner, Sue C.
My vision for the Mennonite church #2, 9:3,2
Stoltzfus, Ruth Brunk
My vision for the Mennonite church #1, 8:27,2
Since Jesus has been raised from the dead, 4:9,6
Stoner, John K.
Learning the right things from this story, 5:21,8
Stuckey, Anne
My vision for the Mennonite church #4, 9:17,1

Key:
first number = month
second number = issue date
third number = page

Weaver, J. Denny
Making sure which game we are playing, 5:21,1
Which way for Mennonite theology? 1:23,1
Weaver, Valerie
Between the rock of peace and the hard place of outreach, 5:21,6
'If we can't evangelize, we can't exist,' 5:7,1
Nicaraguan Mennonite tries to be a 'presence of Jesus,' 12:24,6
Editorials
'Caedmon, sing me a song . . .' 3:1,16
Case for laryngitis, 5:7,16
Doing what comes naturally, 10:8,16
Few old-fashioned cyberjitters, 1:2,16
Good news from the fringes, 12:10,16
Kind without wings, 7:16,16
Little girls and their journals, 9:17,16
This business of pretending, 8:20,20
Wailing with Luo women and Jesus, 3:26,16
Wenger, Mark R.
Is there room for sinners among the saints? 4:16,1
Whose name do we claim? 6:18,1
Widjaja, Paulus
'Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history,' 11:12,1
Wilson, Larry
My vision for the Mennonite church #5, 9:24,8
Witmer, H. Howard
My vision for the Mennonite church #8, 10:15,7
Witmer, Rachel
Gift of a pastor must not be taken for granted, 11:19,6

Yoder, Amanda and June Alliman Yoder
One swing, one God, two sets of eyes (10), 6:25,7
Yordy-Sutter, Janice
My vision for the Mennonite church #8, 10:15,6

Zook, J. Max
My vision for the Mennonite church #1, 8:27,3

SUBJECTS

Adult child as sexual abuse victims
Learning to respond to all kinds of disasters, 11:26,6
Adult children of alcoholics
On three Monday nights in autumn, 4:30,1
African-American churches—fire
Better light than fire! *(editorial)*, 7:9,16
Aged in the church
'Happy birthday' at 100 by 400 *(editorial)*, 2:20,16
The groans of an Omega, 11:5,7
Alcoholics—rehabilitation
On three Monday nights in autumn, 4:30,1
Ambiguity
Are there then no boundaries? *(editorial)*, 5:28,16
Joseph can teach us a great deal more than carpentry, 12:17,6
Life, it seems, is mostly grays *(editorial)*, 5:21,16
O freedom! *(editorial)*, 6:4,16
Angels
Kind without wings *(editorial)*, 7:16,16
Armed forces—religious aspects
Between the rock of peace and the hard place of outreach, 5:21,6
Arts and religion
'Caedmon, sing me a song . . .' *(editorial)*, 3:5,16
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
AMBS *Window (following p. 8)*, 7:23,8; 4:9,8
Authority
Nobody's telling me what to do! *(editorial)*, 4:16,16

Belief and doubt
Just because you have doubts does not mean you are excluded, 4:9,7
Bereavement
Being comforted by those who suffered before us, 12:17,1
Learning better ways to walk through grief with friends, 4:30,6
Bible—hermeneutics
17 principles to help us interpret the Bible, 3:19,1
We can be a people of the Book and a community of the Spirit, 3:19,6
Who then can understand? *(editorial)*, 3:19,16
Bible—interpretation
From what the Bible says to whom the Scripture reveals, 12:10,1
17 principles to help us interpret the Bible, 3:19,1
Bible—study
Who then can understand? *(editorial)*, 3:19,16
Birth
God's moments are rarely just individual events, 6:11,6
Bosnia and Hercegovina
All the king's horses and all the king's men in Bosnia *(Perspective)*, 3:12,10
Business—religious aspects
My business is your business, 10:29,1

Calvary Community Church
'If we can't evangelize, we can't exist,' 5:7,1
Cancer
More real than my own body, 7:9,1
Centurion of Capernaum (biblical character)
Jesus and the centurion: Learning the right thing from this story, 5:21,8
Change
Getting past the extremes to see what the Spirit is doing in new movements, 8:20,10
Pruning is not punishment *(editorial)*, 6:11,16
Child sexual abuse
Learning to respond to all kinds of disasters, 11:26,6
Children—religious life
Learning about God from imperfect models, 7:9,6
Christian giving
God help us. This is what we did. *(editorial)*, 1:16,16
God met me at Wichita, but not inside the temple, 4:16,6
Letters to the editor of 'The Heavenly Financial Times,' 3:12,8
Three things church buildings can never do, 3:5,6
Christian leadership
Gift of administration must not be taken for granted, 4:23,6
In praise of 90-year-old women: What keeps leaders going *(editorial)*, 8:27,16
Christian life
Combining our meditation with our action, 3:19,8
Isn't a pulpit just a place to spread one's papers? 10:8,6
Kind without wings *(editorial)*, 7:16,16
Learning to know and practice the passions of God's heart, 9:3,6
Let me tell you what God did for me *(editorial)*, 2:27,16
Since Jesus has been raised from the dead, 4:9,6
So who wants to be a martyr? *(editorial)*, 10:22,16
Surely the God who knew the heart of Naaman knows the heart of Yassir, 3:5,1
What I wonder about on Stewardship Sunday *(editorial)*, 10:29,16
What patriotism means to me, 7:2,3
You did not choose me; I chose you, 2:27,8
Christian martyrs
From flaccid whiners to authentic witnesses, 10:22,1
So who wants to be a martyr? *(editorial)*, 10:22,16
Christianity—developing countries
'Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history,' 11:12,1
Christians
Whose name do we claim? 6:18,1
Christians in Sudan
Surely the God who knew the heart of Naaman knows the heart of Yassir, 3:5,1
Christmas
'At least I do what I say I'm going to do,' 12:17,8
Because Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes, 12:24,5
If there just weren't hens and frogs, 12:24,8
Shall we celebrate the sun or the Son? 12:24,1
Church and college
Going home is the most difficult cross-cultural experience, 1:30,8
Mennonite college and its constituency *(editorial)*, 1:30,16
Wanderer, come home; but first wander, 1:30,1
Church and society
My religio-socio-political creed on social responsibility, 7:16,6
Through North Dakota. On Amtrak. *(editorial)*, 7:23,16
Church and state
Another chance to reaffirm our primary allegiance, 12:10,6
Are Christians patriots? Should we be? 7:2,1
How should we pray for Bosnia? 2:6,12
Making sure which game we are playing, 5:21,1
My religio-socio-political creed on social responsibility, 7:16,6
One small candle *(editorial)*, 4:30,16
Some principles for an Anabaptist witness to governing authorities, 8:6,5

Church buildings
Freeing the church from the beg, borrow, and steal syndrome, 10:29,6
Three things church buildings can never do, 3:5,6
Church colleges
Finding out why I decided to attend a Mennonite College, 1:30,6
Church controversies
Are there then no boundaries? *(editorial)*, 5:28,16
Case for laryngitis *(editorial)*, 5:7,16
Conflict can be God's call for spiritual growth, 5:14,1
It doesn't have to be a long hot summer *(editorial)*, 3:12,20
Life, it seems, is mostly grays *(editorial)*, 5:21,16
Living out the reality: love is the greatest, 9:10,1
When the church won't buy your computer *(editorial)*, 8:6,16
Who's to go: liberals or conservatives? *(editorial)*, 10:1,16
Church discipline
Confronting sin in the congregation, 2:20,1
Letting the whole field grow with patience *(Mennobytes)*, 11:26,8
Church growth
Between the rock of peace and the hard place of outreach, 5:21,6
Conflict can be God's call for spiritual growth, 5:14,1
Freeing the church from the beg, borrow, and steal syndrome, 10:29,6
From flaccid whiners to authentic witnesses, 10:22,1
Getting past the extremes to see what the Spirit is doing in new movements, 8:20,10
God help us. This is what we did. *(editorial)*, 1:16,16
'If we can't evangelize, we can't exist,' 5:7,1
Three things church buildings can never do, 3:5,6
Church membership
When to build fences and when to open gates, 5:28,1
Why I am a Mennonite *(editorial)*, 6:18,16
Church music—instruction and study
Is four-part singing really Mennonite? 1:16,6
Church music—Mennonite Church
How can we keep from singing? 1:16,1
Is four-part singing really Mennonite? 1:16,6
Church renewal
My vision for the Mennonite church: (1) 8:27,1; (2) 9:3,1; (3) 9:10,6; (4) 9:17,1; (5) 9:24,6; (6) 10:1,6; (7) 10:8,1; (8) 10:15,6
Clergy
The gift of a pastor must not be taken for granted, 11:26,6
Cold War
Will NATO go east? *(Perspective)*, 12:10,8
College students
Wanderer, come home; but first wander, 1:30,1
Competition
Replacing 'Did you win?' with 'How did you play?' 11:5,4
Computer networks
MennoLINK: a route for persons interested in Mennonites, 1:2,3
Computers
A few old-fashioned cyberjitters *(editorial)*, 1:2,16
Solitaire *(editorial)*, 10:15,16
Conflict management
Conflict can be God's call for spiritual growth, 5:14,1
Deciding when to stand between and when to stand alongside, 1:2,6
It doesn't have to be a long hot summer *(editorial)*, 3:12,20
Conversion
Is there room for sinners among the saints? 4:16,1
Criticism
In praise of the church's critics: What keeps the vision sharp *(editorial)*, 9:24,16
Cynicism
How I keep from becoming cynical, 6:18,8

Death
Wailing with Luo women and with Jesus *(editorial)*, 3:26,16
Developing countries—religion
'Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history,' 11:12,1
What will get us to the shore? *(editorial)*, 11:12,16

Easter
Easter Sunday ought to push us into action, 4:2,8
God gave one powerful shout at Easter, 4:9,1
Educational leadership
Gift of administration must not be taken for granted, 4:23,6
Electronic mail lists
MennoLINK: a route for persons interested in Mennonites, 1:2,3
Environmental ethics
One small candle *(editorial)*, 4:30,16

Fetal death
Learning better ways to walk through grief with friends, 4:30,6
Finance, personal
Figuring out when enough is enough, 11:19,1
My business is your business, 10:29,1
Forgiveness
Do you want to be well? 7:2,6
Freedom
O freedom! *(editorial)* 6:4,16
We are free to do whatever we want! 7:16,1
Friendship
Learning to know the face of Mennonite mammon *(Mennobytes)*, 10:29,5
What Carol Smith taught me about the holy kiss, 6:4,6
What's so special about the small church, 6:18,6

Gambling
Are we losing our moorings while gambling with our souls? 7:30,6
When we win the lottery *(editorial)*, 7:30,16
General Conference Mennonite Church—mergers
See, I am making all things new *(editorial)*, 4:9,9
God—will
Pruning is not punishment *(editorial)*, 6:11,16
God—love
Learning to know and practice the passions of God's heart, 9:3,6
Good and evil
Jesus slipped into Jerusalem by having a parade, 3:26,6
What we can learn about victory from a Beninese village, 7:23,6
***Gospel Herald*—letters to the editor**
In praise of the church's critics: What keeps the vision sharp *(editorial)*, 9:24,16
Grace (theology)
Jesus and the centurion: Learning the right thing from this story, 5:21,8
We are free to do whatever we want! 7:16,1
Grief
Being comforted by those who have suffered before us, 12:17,6
God was there with her when no one else could be 8:27,6
Have you forsaken us? 8:27,7
Learning better ways to walk through grief with friends, 4:30,6
Wailing with Luo women and with Jesus *(editorial)*, 3:26,16

Handicapped—religious life
Gathering around the 'disabled God,' 11:26,2
Healing
Some things God alone can see, 5:14,6
What does spirituality have to do with healing? 6:4,1
Holy Spirit
Getting past the extremes to see what the Spirit is doing in new movements, 8:20,10
We can be a people of the Book and a community of the Spirit, 3:19,6
Homicide
God was there with her when no one else could be: A tribute to Alicia Showalter Reynolds, 8:27,6
Hope
God doesn't carry a Daytimer *(editorial)*, 11:19,16
Human reproduction—moral and ethical aspects
Facing tough questions about the beginning of life, 2:13,8
Humility
Peace, peace, when there may be no peace *(editorial)*, 4:23,16

Identification (Mennonite)
Mennonite—and proud of it, 8:20,2
Through North Dakota. On Amtrak. *(editorial)*, 7:23,16
Why churches do or do not use the word 'Mennonite,' 8:20,1
Why I am a Mennonite *(editorial)*, 6:18,16
Image of God
Learning about God from imperfect models, 7:9,6
Immanence of God
Paying attention to the Word in the routine, 2:27,1
Inclusiveness
When to build fences and when to open gates, 5:28,1
Individualism
I do not want to go it alone, 12:31,6
My business is your business, 10:29,1
Internet
A few old-fashioned cyberjitters *(editorial)*, 1:2,16

Key:
first number = month
second number = issue date
third number = page

Coming to terms with computer 'stuff,' 6:11,1
Cyberspace is also God's space, 1:2,1
What's the real issue with TV and computers? 10:15,1

Interpersonal relations
Being born again is possible, even for a stodgy, middle-aged seminary professor, 2:13,1

Jesus Christ—entry into Jerusalem
Jesus slipped into Jerusalem by having a parade, 3:26,6

Jesus Christ—lordship
Place to begin Mennonite theology: Jesus Christ is Lord, 7:30,1

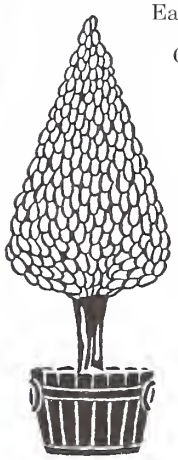
Jesus Christ—crucifixion
Cross is the fullest extension of choice God gives to humanity, 4:2,6
On a hill—far away *(editorial)*, 4:2,16
Why do we call this Friday 'good'? 4:2,1

Jesus Christ—passion
Why do we call this Friday 'good'? 4:2,1

Jesus Christ—person and offices
Nobody's telling me what to do! *(editorial)*, 4:16,16

Jesus Christ—power
What we can learn about victory from a Beninese village, 7:23,6

Jesus Christ—resurrection
Easter Sunday ought to push us into action, 4:2,8
God gave one powerful shout at Easter, 4:9,1
Just because you have doubts does not mean you are excluded, 4:9,7
Since Jesus has been raised from the dead, 4:9,6



Language
Watch your language, *(Mennobytes)*, 12:31,8

Lent
Lent: from introspection to life with new meaning, 2:20,7
Lent is a time to face our dying, 2:20,8

Living with ambiguity
Life, it seems, is mostly grays *(editorial)*, 5:21,16
Are there then no boundaries? *(editorial)*, 5:28,16
O freedom! *(editorial)*, 6:4,16

Lord's supper
'Did we get it right, Dorothy?' 11:26,1
Gathering around the 'disabled God,' 11:26,2

Love
Living out the reality: love is the greatest, 9:10,1

Medical Ethics
Facing tough questions about the beginning of life, 2:13,8

Meditation—Christianity
Combining our meditation with our action, 3:19,8

Men
Calling men to life as God's sons, 2:6,9
Movement of hope—and a wellspring of debate, 2:6,8
What does headship really mean? 2:6,8
What is this men's movement all about? 2:6,1

Menno Simons
Following Menno—as he followed Christ, 11:5,1

Mennonite Central Committee
Common Place (following p. 10), 9:24,8; 3:12,10

Mennonite Church
In praise of middle-aged farmers: What keeps the church going *(editorial)*, 9:10,16
Whose name do we claim? 6:18,1

Mennonite Church—Europe
After five centuries of flux: Who are the Mennonites in Europe today? 9:17,6
Losing and now recovering the peace position, 9:17,8

Mennonite Church General Assembly, Orlando, Fla., 1997
This business of pretending *(editorial)*, 8:20,16

Mennonite Church General Assembly, Wichita '95
God met me at Wichita, but not inside the temple, 4:16,6

Mennonite Church—assemblies
'Here we are, Lord' *(editorial)*, 9:3,16

Mennonite Church—doctrines
Peace: a Mennonite restriction or a gospel fundamental? 10:22,6
Why we believe in peace and justice—for now, on earth, 9:24,1

Mennonite Church—history
Following Menno—as he followed Christ, 11:5,1

Mennonite Church—leadership
The gift of a pastor must not be taken for granted, 11:26,6

Mennonite Church—mergers
See, I am making all things new *(editorial)*, 4:9,9

Mennonite Church—missions
Carpets were red, carpets are blue, 1:9,5
How to be a missionary *(editorial)*, 1:9,16
It's okay if you want to call me a 'missionary,' 1:9,1
Mission as partnership: 'You have given us goods. Now give us friends.' 11:12,4
What mission has done to the Mennonite church, 11:12,6
What will get us to the shore? *(editorial)*, 11:12,16
Your time is not yet over; your task is not complete, 6:25,1

Mennonite Church—theology
Place to begin Mennonite theology: Jesus Christ is Lord, 7:30,1

Mennonite Church—theology, doctrinal
Which way for Mennonite theology? 1:23,1

Mennonite Church—young adults
Wanderer, come home; but first wander, 1:30,1

Mennonite churches
Why churches do or do not use the word 'Mennonite,' 8:20,1

Mennonite Renewal Service
What MRS can teach us about PK *(editorial)*, 2:6,20

Mennonites
'Here we are, Lord' *(editorial)*, 9:3,16
In praise of middle-aged farmers: what keeps the church going *(editorial)*, 9:10,16
Mennonite—and proud of it, 8:20,2

Mennonites in Europe
After five centuries of flux: Who are the Mennonites in Europe today? 9:17,6

Mennonites in Spain
Your time is not yet over; your task is not complete, 6:25,1

Mennonites—African Americans
'If we can't evangelize, we can't exist,' 5:7,1

Mennonites—Canada
What's in a border? *(editorials), (1)* 6:25,16, *(2)* 7:2,16

Mennonites—Christian life
Here, among Mennonites, I have seen God, 8:6,1

Mennonites—clergy
She said 'yes'! She said 'yes'! 7:23,1
My congregation helped me decide God was talking to me, 1:23,6
You did not choose me; I chose you, 2:27,8

Mennonites—United States
What's in a border? *(editorials), (1)* 6:25,16, *(2)* 7:2,16

Mission of the church
Cyberspace is also God's space, 1:2,1
My vision for the Mennonite church (1), 8:27,1, (2):, 9:3,1, (3), 9:10,6; (4), 9:17,1; (5), 9:24,6; (6), 10:1,6; (7), 10:8,1; (8), 10:15,6

Missionaries
How to be a missionary *(editorial)*, 1:9,16
Is overseas mission a thing of the past? 1:9,6
It's okay if you want to call me a 'missionary,' 1:9,1

Missions
Carpets were red, carpets are blue, 1:9,5
Is overseas mission a thing of the past? 1:9,6
Mission as partnership: 'You have given us goods. Now give us friends.' 11:12,4
Your time is not yet over; your task is not complete, 6:25,1

Money—religious aspects
Are we losing our moorings while gambling with our souls? 7:30,6
Figuring out when enough is enough, 11:19,1

Nationalism
Some second thoughts about nationalism *(Perspective)*, 6:11,8

Parenting
Learning about God from imperfect models, 7:9,6

Parliamentary practice
Who invited this guy named Robert? *(editorial)*, 2:13,20

Patriotism
Are Christians patriots? Should we be? 7:2,1
What patriotism means to me, 7:2,3

Peace
All the king's horses and all the king's men in Bosnia *(Perspective)*, 3:12,10
Deciding when to stand between and when to stand alongside, 1:2,6
Between the rock of peace and the hard place of outreach, 5:21,6
Losing and now recovering the peace position, 9:17,8
Making sure which game we are playing, 5:21,1
Peace: a Mennonite restriction or a gospel fundamental? 10:22,6
Why we believe in peace and justice—for now, on earth, 9:24,1

Poetry
Hebrews 12, 6:25,8
Right words, 7:30,4

Poverty
Good news from the fringes *(editorial)*, 12:10,16
This business of pretending *(editorial)*, 8:20,16
Power of God
Following the peace—one person's journey toward intimacy with God, 5:28,6
Prayer
How should we pray for Bosnia? 2:6,12
One swing, one God, two sets of eyes, 6:25,7
Prayer is often a matter of just showing up, 10:1,1
Presence of God
Following the peace—one person's journey toward intimacy with God, 5:28,6
Let me tell you what God did for me *(editorial)*, 2:27,16
Paying attention to the Word in the routine, 2:27,1
Prayer is often a matter of just showing up, 10:1,1
When the door is closed, 5:7,6
Promise Keepers (organization)
Calling men to life as God's sons, 2:6,9
Movement of hope—and a wellspring of debate, 2:6,8
What MRS can teach us about PK *(editorial)*, 2:6,20
Public welfare
Doing what comes naturally *(editorial)*, 10:8,16

Rahab (biblical character)
Is there room for sinners among the saints? 4:16,1
Retreats
Sounds of silence—a Type A struggles to be still, 3:26,1
Revivals
Revival fires and an Anabaptist pilgrimage, 3:12,1
Reynolds, Alicia Showalter
God was there with her when no one else could be: A tribute to Alicia Showalter Reynolds, 8:27,6
Have you forsaken us? Memorial for Alicia Showalter Reynolds, 8:27,7
Robert's Rules of Order
Who invited this guy named Robert? *(editorial)*, 2:13,20
Rural churches
What's so special about the small church? 6:18,6

Sacred vocal music
How can we keep from singing? 1:16,1
Salvation
Deciding when to stand between and when to stand alongside, 1:2,6
Is there room for sinners among the saints? 4:16,1
'Today salvation has come to this house,' 12:31,1
Sects—United States
Whose name do we claim? 6:18,1
Self-control
Me, myself, and I *(editorial)*, 5:14,16
Service (theology)
Learning to know the face of Mennonite mammon *(Mennobytes)*, 10:29,5
Sex role—biblical teaching
What does headship really mean? 2:6,8
Silence
Case for laryngitis *(editorial)*, 5:7,16
Sounds of silence—a Type A struggles to be still, 3:26,1
Sin
Confronting sin in the congregation, 2:20,1
Do you want to be well? 7:2,6
Living out the reality: love is the greatest, 9:10,1
Small churches
What's so special about the small church? 6:18,6
Social justice
Another chance to reaffirm our primary allegiance, 12:10,6
Why we believe in peace and justice—for now, on earth, 9:24,1
Solomon (biblical character)
Making the penultimate too important often leads to violence, 4:23,1
Spiritual biography
How my God has met me *(series)*
Being born again is possible, even for a stodgy, middle-aged seminary professor, 2:13,1
Following the peace-one person's journey toward intimacy with God, 5:28,6
God met me at Wichita, but not inside the temple, 4:16,6
God's moments are rarely just individual events, 6:11,6
Here, among Mennonites, I have seen God, 8:6,1
More real than my own body, 7:9,1
On three Monday nights in autumn, 4:30,1
One swing, one God, two sets of eyes, 6:25,7
Revival fires and an Anabaptist pilgrimage, 3:12,1
She said 'yes'! She said 'yes'! 7:23,1
Some things God alone can see, 5:14,6
Sounds of silence-a Type A struggles to be still, 3:26,1
You did not choose me; I chose you, 2:27,8
Spiritual healing
Do you want to be well? 7:2,6
What does spirituality have to do with healing? 6:4,1
Spiritual warfare
What we can learn about victory from a Beninese village, 7:23,6
Spirituality
What does spirituality have to do with healing? 6:4,1
Sports—religious aspects
Replacing 'Did you win?' with 'How did you play?' 11:5,4
Stewardship
Are we losing our moorings while gambling with our souls? 7:30,6
('Dear God, I make too much') *(editorial)*, 1:23,16
Figuring out when enough is enough, 11:19,1
Freeing the church from the beg, borrow, and steal syndrome, 10:29,6
Tough questions for our future: (1) What do I tell them in India? *(editorial)*, 12:17,16
Tough questions for our future: (2) Who should pay to do church? *(editorial)*, 12:24,16
Tough questions for our future: (3) Why is everything going 'local'? *(editorial)*, 12:31,20
What I wonder about on Stewardship Sunday *(editorial)*, 10:29,16
When the church won't buy your computer *(editorial)*, 8:6,16
When we win the lottery *(editorial)*, 7:30,16
Suffering
On a hill—far away *(editorial)*, 4:2,16

Tares (parable)
Letting the whole field grow with patience *(Mennobytes)*, 11:26,8
Technology—religious aspects
Solitaire *(editorial)*, 10:15,16
What's the real issue with TV and computers? 10:15,1
Television
Me, myself, and I *(editorial)*, 5:14,16
Theology, doctrinal
Which way for Mennonite theology? 1:23,1
Trust
God doesn't carry a Daytimer *(editorial)*, 11:19,16

Universities and colleges—Mennonite
Finding out why I decided to attend a Mennonite College, 1:30,6
Going home is the most difficult cross-cultural experience, 1:30,8
Mennonite college and its constituency *(editorial)*, 1:30,16

Violence
Making the penultimate too important often leads to violence, 4:23,1
Nicaraguan Mennonite tries to be a 'presence of Jesus,' 12:24,6
Peace, peace, when there may be no peace *(editorial)*, 4:23,16
Vision '95
God help us. This is what we did. *(editorial)*, 1:16,16

Wealth
Dear God, I make too much *(editorial)*, 1:23,16
Learning to know the face of Mennonite mammon *(Mennobytes)*, 10:29,5
Wit and humor—Mennonite
Mennonite M & M's, 7:16,8
Top 10 Mennonite bumper stickers, 7:23,5
Top 10 questions facing the church in the year 2050, 2:27,9
Top 10 rejected names for the integrated GC-MC church, 10:8,6
Witness bearing, Christian
From flaccid whiners to authentic witnesses, 10:22,1
Some principles for an Anabaptist witness to governing authorities, 8:6,5
Women in the church
Isn't a pulpit just a place to spread one's papers? 10:8,6
Little girls and their journals *(editorial)*, 9:17,16
Writing and writers
How I keep from becoming cynical, 6:18,8

Yugoslavia (former)
How should we pray for Bosnia? 2:6,12

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Tough questions for our future (3):

Why is everything going 'local'?

Sit in on any church meeting discussing finances these days, and I can guarantee you'll hear one word: "local." If I heard it once when the Mennonite Church General Board was working on budget during its fall sessions (see editorials in the Dec. 17th and 24th issues), I heard "local" a dozen times.

What does "local" mean in financial discussions? It means more of the money we Mennonites give to the church is staying home, being used by our individual congregations. That means less for district conferences—who, in turn, have less to pass on to churchwide agencies.

Is this a good thing? Most of the discussions I hear say "yes." Even many of the conference and churchwide staffs—who are having to downsize, cut, or readjust—say that. Localism is a good thing because it can mean more of us are getting involved in the life and mission of the church.

Vision '95 and Living in Faithful Evangelism (LIFE), for example, got us doing outreach at home like seldom before. That takes money. So does starting new churches in other countries, which some of our larger congregations are now beginning to do on their own.

Another growing "local" endeavor is educational assistance. Congregations are giving scholarships to their young people so they can attend Mennonite schools. Recently I've heard of several congregations that now have more than half of their annual budgets used this way.

Then there's the matter of pastoral salaries. More of our leaders are getting paid—and better. Pastors no longer have to have another job to support themselves during the week and then preach on Sundays.

In many ways, in the move toward the local, we Mennonites are just doing what we've been told to do. Our mission agencies have said everyone needs to be involved in mission—so we are. Our education people have taught us we need to help our young people with their schooling—and we do. Our leadership staff have said we need to support our pastors—and support them we will.

But I still wonder. I wonder about this trend to go local. I wonder because I recognize that it can feed parts of myself that need little or no encouragement:

1. I grew up knowing I should "do my own thing." I was taught well by the culture (and many times by the church) that independence and self-sufficiency are high values for a good (and godly) life. Today I struggle at times to give up that independence for the group, even for a group as noble as the church. So I must ask myself: How much of my need to keep things local is merely my North American individualism in disguise?

2. There's so little I can control these days, especially with my money. Taxes, pensions, Social Security payments, health care premiums—sometimes I wonder if I may be working full-time to support someone else! But I must also ask the question: How much of the push toward using even my voluntary contributions locally is an expression of my need to control?

3. Then there are my dreams and goals. I want a good education for my children, so I'll support the church's educational assistance fund. I want my congregation to be involved in overseas mission, particularly if it means I may get to travel to exotic locations I've not seen before. If a good salary for my pastor means getting the kind of person that enhances our church's reputation, in either the community or the denomination, I'm all for it.

This is not to say that the move toward keeping funds locally comes only from individualism, control, or self-centered dreams and goals. But for me, at least, it's important to recognize that the seeds for those are there.

The antidote? Perhaps these words from Jesus: "To whom much has been given, much will be required. . . . To whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded" (Luke 12:48b).

Did Jesus have us in mind when he said that? This may be one of the tougher questions which will face North American Mennonites as we finish one century and go into another. If Jesus did, then there should be plenty of money to go around: local, conference, churchwide. And we might even be surprised by the leftovers!—*jlp*

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